LAMAR UNIVERSITY BEAUMONT
0 00 01 0791397 2
STUDENT'S
DATE DUE
01 06 92
STUDENT'S
DATE DUE
09 11 92

LAMAR UNIVERSITY-BEAUMONT
0 00 01 0096675 3

D
109
S4
1969

Sergeant.

Dominant women.

↑ 806271

Lamar State College of Technology
Beaumont, Texas

PRINTED IN U.S.A.

DISCARDED

DOMINANT WOMEN

Catherine the Great, in Coronation Robes.
From the painting by Rokotov (1763).

↑ 806271

DOMINANT WOMEN

D
109
S4
1969

by

PHILIP WALSINGHAM SERGEANT

LIBRARY OF
LAMAR STATE COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY

WITH 16 ILLUSTRATIONS

Essay Index Reprint Series

BOOKS FOR LIBRARIES PRESS
FREEPORT, NEW YORK

First Published 1929
Reprinted 1969

STANDARD BOOK NUMBER:
8369-1155-5

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOG CARD NUMBER:
75-86783

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

TO
M.S.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

https://archive.org/details/dominantwomen0000phil

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	INTRODUCTORY	11
II.	CLEOPATRA THE MAGNIFICENT	37
III.	ZENOBIA, QUEEN OF THE EAST	56
IV.	THEODORA OF BYZANTIUM	78
V.	ENGLAND'S ROYAL ENIGMA	94
VI.	TARABAI RANI	112
VII.	"THE BEASTLY BRACE"	145
VIII.	DUCHESS SARAH	191
IX.	WOMAN-RULE IN RUSSIA	208
X.	THE DANCER-POLITICIAN	231
XI.	"THE OLD BUDDHA"	258
	EPILOGUE	277

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Catherine the Great, in Coronation Robes — *Frontispiece*
From the painting by Rokotov (1763)

Facing page

Elagabalus, Roman Emperor — 26
From a bust in the Capitol, Rome

Cleopatra — 38
From an antique sculpture in the Capitol, Rome

Zenobia, Captive — 56
From a modern statue by Miss Hofmer

Theodora, Empress of Byzantium — 78
From a mosaic at Ravenna

Queen Elizabeth — 94
From a painting, possibly by Gerards, in the National Portrait Gallery

Mary, Queen of Scots — 110
From a portrait, of the school of Clouet, at Chantilly

Barbara Villiers, Countess of Castlemaine and Duchess of Cleveland — 146
From a painting by Lely in the National Portrait Gallery

Louise Renée de Kéroualle, Duchess of Portsmouth — 160
From a painting by Pierre Mignard in the National Portrait Gallery

Hortense Mancini, Duchess of Mazarin — 184
From a painting by Pierre Mignard

Sarah Jennings, Duchess of Marlborough — 194
From an engraving after a painting by Kneller

Elizabeth, Empress of Russia — 214
From an engraving after a painting by Benner

Catherine II, Empress of Russia — 224
From a painting after Lambi

Lola Montez — 232

Ludwig I of Bavaria — 242
From a painting by Kaulbach

Tze-hi, Empress Dowager — 262
From a photograph

NOTE.

The portrait of Catherine the Great which makes the frontispiece is that which she herself considered her best. To its discovery, as such, I am indebted to an article by Mr. Nicholas Volkoff in *The Connoisseur* for January, 1929, on "Russian Portrait Painters of the Age of Catherine the Great."

PHILIP W. SERGEANT.

Dominant Women

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

The figure of the dominant woman is one which has intrigued the historian, and his readers, throughout the ages. From the earliest days she has extorted admiration, mixed at times with a male aghastness at her presumption in grasping at the supposed prerogative of the stronger sex. One might imagine that the historians, and their readers, had passed their lives in a world of cavemen, ruling over harems of weak, silent women!

In reality, of course, the will to exercise power is a common attribute of women. The limits within which this will acts make the difference between "dominating" and "domineering" characters. Could the domineering woman, given the opportunities of her more fortunate sister (if indeed it is fortune), make her mark on a wider humanity as she does, perhaps, on one poor man, on one cowed family? Her subjects, it may be suspected, would often like to see her have a chance. But the chance does not come. This particular flower of womanhood is born to blush unseen, as far as the wider humanity is concerned.

In the remote past only queens, or queens-to-be, got

the chance; though they were fairly scattered about the nations by an impartial Providence. Did these forceful ladies of high antiquity ever really exist? That is a question which cannot be answered. They may be, as so many of their male parallels have been declared to be, just myths.

One of the first of them was Nitócris, the female ruler of Egypt about five thousand years ago, who took such a summary revenge upon those who had murdered her husband. She ascended the vacant throne and invited the murderers to a banquet in an underground chamber near the banks of the Nile. The murderers must have been simple folk, for they accepted the invitation. They had their dinner, and were then drowned by the Nile waters let suddenly into the banqueting-chamber.

There is something very Oriental about this. The great Chinese viceroy, Li Hung-chang, in 1863, similarly gave a banquet to the Wangs, leaders of the defeated "Long-haired Rebels," after General Gordon and his Ever Victorious Army had captured their stronghold Soochow. The banquet was on a barge in the river, and very unfortunately at the end of a pleasant feast there was a scare of a riot in Soochow, and the barge became a scene of massacre, in which all the Wangs perished. Viceroy Li was safely out of the way before the trouble began. An incident of a like nature occurred, probably more than once, in the Chinese civil war of yesterday.

Nitócris is credited with other achievements besides her celebrated act of vengeance, such as the completion of the third pyramid, which her husband had begun. In early Egyptian legend she played a great part.

A far more famous name, about a thousand years later, is that of Semiramis. Her story made such an impression on the world that the name is used as a term both of admiration and of abuse. Catherine the Great of Russia used to delight when her learned friends addressed her by the title of "Semiramis of the North." Others called her a Semiramis with less friendly implication.

The prosaic tell us that there was no such person. Antiquity believed, however, that she was part founder of the Assyrian Empire, its ruler for forty-two years, the builder of Babylon, and the conqueror of Egypt and much of Nearer Asia. It made her the wife of the warrior king Ninus, who took her from one of his generals, and was ultimately by her deposed and perhaps murdered—though she built him a fine tomb. Did Catherine, we may wonder, ever think of this gesture on the part of Semiramis? She built no tomb for the murdered Tsar Peter.

Solomon's friend, the Queen of Sheba,* who came from her Arabian home to pay him the famous visit, with her gifts of "an hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices very great store, and precious stones," has also been dismissed as a legend. And so has the Empress Jingo Kógo, most illustrious of the nine women who are reputed to have ruled over Jaɻ ɿ at various periods of her history.

The Japanese, however, do not willingly abandon Jingo. Certainly, if she is a myth, she is an imposing

* According to the Abyssinian tradition, an Ethiopian princess, of the name of Makeda. Arab accounts, gathered by Commander C. E. V. Craufurd in his *Treasure of Ophir*, give her an Abyssinian origin, but make her name Biltis. Some credit her with excessive hairiness and feet like a goat's!

myth. Wife of a weak Emperor, she tried strenuously to spur him to action. She even produced for him a vision of a marvellous country waiting to be conquered west of Japan. When she came to tell him, the Emperor was playing the lute, and a courtier recommended him to go on playing. Everyone knew, he said, that west of Japan there was only water and sky. The Emperor accordingly took up his lute again, but was suddenly stricken with death. (How dangerous it was to be husband to one of these ladies !) Jingo now began to reign alone, and, leading the Japanese forces over into Korea, conquered it. This she did in the name of her son, not yet born when his father died. After his own death the son was deified as Hachiman, god of war, an honour which he owed entirely to his mother's prowess.

The legend makes Jingo not only successful on the battlefield, but also a very strict disciplinarian with her troops, though merciful to a beaten foe.

We emerge now into more historical surroundings, and are confronted by another Asiatic warrior-woman, Tomyris, queen of a Scythian or Turkoman tribe living near the Sea of Aral. With her savage army she met and defeated Cyrus the Great, founder of the Persian Empire, conqueror of Assyria, who had been carrying all before him until he encountered her. Cyrus was killed in battle, and Tomyris had his head cut off and put into a skin bag full of human blood—that he might be sated with it, she said. After this she fades away. The Persians sought no further acquaintance with so fierce a foe.

Cyrus's daughter Atossa was a woman of strong character, who exercised considerable influence on the

men with whom she came in contact. As child of Cyrus, wife of Darius, who planned to invade Greece, and mother of Xerxes, who actually made the invasion, she had no weaklings to deal with. Over Darius—he was her third husband—she was reputed to have a great hold; and it was he who completed the work which Cyrus had begun in Persia.

One of the lesser rulers who accompanied Xerxes into Greece was Artemisia, queen of the small Carian state of Halicarnassus. A more famous Artemisia sat on the throne of Halicarnassus over a century later. But her chief claim to celebrity was the intensity of her grief for her husband Mausolus, for whose body—not having previously murdered him—she erected the splendid tomb that has given a name to all monuments of the kind. She was not so much a dominant as a dominated woman; one dominated by a great sorrow.

A whole group of most masterful women sprang from the semi-Hellenic race which inhabited Macedonia when it entered into the world's history. They were far from pleasant ladies, to whom generally murder was the veriest trifle and warfare quite a common occupation. The first of them, Olympias, mother of Alexander the Great, was only a Macedonian by marriage, but she had all the characteristics of the group. She had good reason for objecting to the "goings-on" of her husband Philip, especially when he actually married a young wife without troubling to get rid of her first. Olympias left for the court of her brother in Epirus, but not long after came back to Macedonia, where there must have been an apparent reconciliation, for a marriage was celebrated

between their daughter and her uncle of Epirus. The wedding festivities were spoilt by the assassination of Philip, to which everyone was satisfied that Olympias was privy. Alexander, however, was in full sympathy with his mother, who lived peaceably in Macedonia throughout his reign. His premature death at Babylon left her in a precarious position, for she and Antipater, the regent in charge of Macedonia, were bitter enemies. Once more she retired to her brother's court until she thought the time favourable to take a hand in the game.

There was another militant woman, Cynane, daughter of Philip by his first wife, and therefore half-sister to Alexander; and she also resolved to bid for power. She had a marriageable daughter, Eurydice, whom she is said to have trained in the arts of war. It struck her that a suitable husband for Eurydice would be a weak-minded young man named Arrhidæus, son of Philip by a dancing girl, who through the fortunate accident of being in Babylon at the time of Alexander's death had been chosen to succeed his half-brother on the throne.

Cynane hastened to Asia with her daughter. She was successful in so far as Eurydice became wife to Arrhidæus. But she herself was seized and put to death by the general Perdiccas, who was supreme in the counsels of Arrhidæus, and who feared Cynane's ambition.

Arrhidæus and Eurydice crossed over to Macedonia with the intention of establishing their rule there. Olympias took up the challenge, and a battle was fought in which husband and wife were defeated and captured. Olympias had them both executed, together with a large number of other enemies of hers. But Nemesis was not

slow in overtaking her. Cassander, a son of her old opponent Antipater, aiming at the supreme power in Macedonia himself, turned his arms against her, took her prisoner, and put her to death. These viragos got as little mercy as they showed.

For the better part of three hundred years women of Macedonian descent continued to play a prominent, and only too often disgraceful, part in the affairs of the "succession" states which rose from the break-up of Alexander's empire. The worst of them were among the Cleopatras—a name very common in the royal families of both Egypt and Syria. Perhaps the two most notorious were the sisters Cleopatra, daughters of Ptolemy VI of Egypt. One of these married in succession three occupants of the Syrian throne. She married the third while the second was still alive and captive in Parthia; but she stopped all reproaches by murdering the second after his return to Syria. She had this excuse, that her husband had likewise bigamously taken to himself a wife in Parthia. But she proceeded to put to death her son and his, because he claimed his father's throne. There was a younger son, with whom, it was said, she also planned to do away. He, however, discerned his mother's intention, and made her drink the cup of poison which she had prepared for him.

The other Cleopatra sister was rather tame in comparison with the Syrian queen. Marrying her uncle, Ptolemy VII, she was left a widow with two sons. Of these the younger was her favourite, and she contrived at last to get the elder expelled and the younger put on the throne by her side—for the widowed queen-mother always exercised great authority in Egypt. The favoured son

was not grateful, since he poisoned or otherwise got rid of his mother. By some, however, he was justified in that she had designs on his life. The assassin did not enjoy his sole rule long. The people of Alexandria rose and turned him out in favour of the elder brother.

A somewhat less sordid story is that of the best-known of the Berenikes—another common name in the royal families of Macedonian descent. At least, the heroine is less sordid than were the sisters Cleopatra. This Berenike was the daughter of Magas, King of Cyrene, and his wife Apama, a Syrian princess; both Macedonians in origin. Now Cyrene had voluntarily united itself with Egypt under the first Ptolemy. But Magas declared himself free after the death of Ptolemy (who was his stepfather), and was only pacified by an arrangement that his daughter Berenike, still an infant, should be regarded as his heir and should be betrothed to the Crown Prince of Egypt, the infant son of Ptolemy II.

Magas died, leaving his wife Apama in control of affairs. She did not at all favour the Egyptian alliance, and looked forward to Cyrene's independence again. There was a romantic young Macedonian prince, Demetrius, known as "the Fair," son of the celebrated warrior-king of Macedonia, Demetrius Poliorketes, and half-brother of the present Macedonian king, Antigonus Gonatas. The last-named and Ptolemy II were bad friends, and, whether Apama invited the sending of Demetrius to Cyrene or it was his own idea, Antigonus was anxious to stir up a revolt against Egypt.

Apama had planned the betrothal of her daughter Berenike to the Macedonian prince. But when he arrived

she fell in love with him herself and threw discretion to the winds. Berenike was only about fourteen years old; but she was clearly already a woman who knew her own mind. She went with a guard to her mother's chamber, found Demetrius there, and had him slain, while ordering her mother's life to be spared. Then she prepared to carry out the Egyptian marriage. She became the wife of Ptolemy III, known as Euergetes, and apparently they "lived happily ever after" until the time of his death.

Berenike is famous in literature as having inspired a poem by Callimachus, imitated by Catullus in his *Coma Berenices*. Very early in their married life Ptolemy set out for war in Syria, and she vowed to offer up her hair in a celebrated temple of Arsinoe if he should return safely, which he did, the vow then being duly carried out and the hair, according to the poet, being transformed into a constellation.

We know but little of Berenike's married years, except that she was reputed to have a very strong influence over her husband, and that he did not, like the rest of the Ptolemies, live a life of scandal. One story is told of her which represents her as a merciful woman. Ptolemy was playing dice, and an officer was meanwhile reading out a list of criminals to be executed, when the Queen seized it out of his hand, saying that the King must not dispose of the matter so lightly.

Ptolemy III reigned twenty-five years, and Berenike was still comparatively young when he died. She did not survive him long. Unhappily for her, their elder son was very unlike either of his parents. His favourite minister was a villainous Alexandrian, by name Sosibius, at whose

instigation he had his brother Magas murdered, while Berenike was placed in confinement and soon was dead also. Her wicked son died a natural death in 205 B.C., leaving behind him the reputation of one of the two worst of all his line—no light stigma.

The last and ablest of this group of Macedonian women was the Cleopatra known to history as the Great. She is the subject of the next chapter in this book.

When we pass from the Greeks, or rather Macedonians (for among the pure Hellenes woman's influence in the political sphere was very small, or at least very much hidden*), to the Roman women, we find a constant growth of feminine power as the Republic evolved towards the Empire. To the virtue of the Republican women Juvenal bears a testimony perhaps exaggerated by his hatred of his female contemporaries, but still more or less supported by what we know of early Roman history. And these virtuous women stayed at home and worked at the family wool, though their share in the moulding of their men's characters was often very great. Cornelia, daughter of Scipio major and mother of the Gracchi, is immortal. Another Cornelia, a younger offshoot of the same family, whom the much-married Pompey took as his fifth wife, was credited with being a lady of considerable intellectual force and an inspiration to her husband; too late, alas! to save him from his melancholy end.

---

* W. G. Holmes, in his *Age of Justinian and Theodora*, points out that in the Homeric age the free woman seems to have lived on equal terms with her male relatives. In Sparta she had the same consideration as man, though she was never invested with political power. In Athens she was ignored. Only the Hetaerae, some of them highly educated, could aspire to influence outside domestic life. Aspasia is the great example.

The dominant woman of Rome, however, emerges a little later. Fulvia may be said to have begun the school. Married in turn to three notorious husbands, the ruffianly Clodius, Curio the rake, and Marcus Antonius (whose third wife she was), she had a very full experience of life, being both a great hater and, where Antony was concerned, a great lover. It was her misfortune that Antony's career brought him in contact with a still more dominant personality in Cleopatra, leading him to cast his Roman wife aside. Though by her imperious and headstrong disposition—"an uneasy wife," Dryden in *All for Love* makes Cleopatra call her—she had involved him in many quarrels, worst of all with his fellow triumvir, the future Emperor Augustus, she was loyal to Antony to the end, and there is pathos in the story of her last stormy interview with him at Athens, after she had all but ruined his cause in Rome, and her retirement to die, it would seem, of a broken heart.

The rise of the Empire gave women an opportunity which they were not slow to grasp, and names come forward which have been bywords ever since. The Emperor Claudius, nephew of Tiberius, provided two of these, in the persons of his second and third wives, Messalina and Agrippina the Younger. Weak rather than bad, and priding himself chiefly on his historical researches, he was an easy prey to harpies, male and female. Messalina, after having had illicit relations with him, was married to him before he ascended the throne. As Empress she grossly abused her privileges, striking at all who appeared to stand in her way. At the same time she abandoned herself to the utmost licence, the Emperor being always

the last to hear of her misdeeds. Finally, in his absence from Rome, she actually celebrated a mock marriage with a young man with whom she had fallen in love. Claudius was forced to take notice of this. He had the young man executed; and his favourite freedman, Narcissus, for fear the Emperor should pardon Messalina, had her put to death too. Narcissus had begun to be doubtful of his own safety with Messalina alive.

Agrippina the Younger, as befits the mother of a Nero, lived and died ill. Her parents, Tiberius's adopted son Germanicus, and Agrippina the Elder, were both virtuous people, even though they did have such children as the insane monster Caligula and Agrippina herself. She had been married twice before when her middle-aged uncle Claudius took her as successor to Messalina. She proved a still more imperious, if less vicious, partner than her predecessor. She induced Claudius to adopt Nero, her son by her first husband, and to give him precedence over his own son, Britannicus. Then she poisoned the unlucky Claudius, and at the age of seventeen Nero became Emperor. His mother hoped to be the real ruler while he was so young. She reckoned without her host. Nero had a will of his own, and he was encouraged by his old tutor, the philosopher Seneca,* to resist her pretensions to equal authority with him. When she began to cultivate the friendship of Britannicus, Nero had him poisoned; and, as she still continued to grasp at power, he had her

* "If education or warning were of any avail," asks Schopenhauer, "how could Seneca's pupil be a Nero?" Seneca, no doubt, was justified in encouraging his pupil to resist his mother's encroachments; but he is also accused of being a party to her murder, and of writing the letter which Nero sent to the Senate defending it. A "warning" here would have redounded more to Seneca's credit.

too assassinated, urged on, it was said, by Poppæa Sabina, a notorious beauty, wife of one of his friends, whom he made first his mistress and ultimately his wife. Poppæa's hold over Nero, however, was only based on her looks, and her death was attributed to a kick from him in a fit of brutal rage, while she was expecting a child.

Two Empresses of the name of Faustina, mother and daughter, were distinguished by the influence which they had over their husbands, both exceptionally good Emperors; Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius. Yet historians would have us believe that both Faustinas were profligate women, entirely undeserving of the love and honour which their husbands gave them. Particularly was Marcus Aurelius devoted to Faustina the Younger, who was his cousin as well as his wife. In his *Meditations*, after thanking the gods that he had good grandfathers, good parents, a good sister, good teachers, good associates, good kinsfolk and friends, nearly everything good, he also thanks them "that I have such a wife, so obedient, so affectionate, and so simple." On her death he loaded her name with honours, as Antoninus Pius had done that of her mother before her.

Can these two Emperors have been so foolishly blind? Or are we to suppose that those who represented the Faustinas as bad women were malignant slanderers? We shall come across another instance later where an Emperor, not indeed up to the moral standard of Antoninus and Marcus Aurelius, but at least a man of decent character, saw all the virtues in his wife, whereas historians have seen all the vices. In the case of Justinian's Theodora there is an explanation: the historian's religious bias. We

have no such explanation for the vilification of the Faustinas. So a mystery remains.

An exotic strain of blood now comes into the story. On the bank of the river Orontes, in the Syrian province of Apamene, was a city called Emesa, where was a famous shrine of the sun-god Elagabal, presided over by a family of high-priest kings who, with the benevolent permission of Rome, continued to combine a certain amount of temporal with their spiritual authority.* To this city, at the beginning of the reign of Commodus, son of Marcus Aurelius and Faustina the Younger, came a Roman officer of North African descent, by name Septimius Severus, who had ambitions and thought he would like to consult the oracle of Emesa.

The high priest of the day was one Julius Bassianus, who had two young daughters, Julia Domna and Julia Mæsa. Syrians though they were, the family liked, by their names, to demonstrate their loyalty to Imperial Rome. Bassianus worked the oracle all right; for Severus learnt that the elder of the priest's daughters was a girl who had the power of making her husband a king. Severus sought her acquaintance, found her beautiful, witty, and well educated, and made her his wife. He also found her a spur to his ambition. Commodus, to the regret of none, had been murdered on the last day of A.D. 192. A veteran soldier, Pertinax, who had risen from nothing, was chosen Emperor in his place, but reigned less than three months, having offended the Army by enforcing discipline. He was murdered by the

* See John Stuart Hay, *The Amazing Emperor Heliogabalus*: an invaluable account of a most remarkable chapter of Roman history.

Prætorian Guards, who then sold the Imperial throne to the highest bidder.

Julia Domna saw the chance for her husband. He had accepted the authority of Pertinax. Why not now come forward as his avenger? Severus agreed, marched on Rome, and quickly made himself master. It took him some years to deal with aspirants to power in other parts of the Empire, but at last he was completely established and could devote himself to foreign affairs, including a campaign in North Britain—at the age of sixty-two. He died at York, three years later.

Julia Domna had brought about the fulfilment of the oracle of Emesa. She had made Severus a king; indeed, with the help of his own undoubted ability, a quite successful Emperor. He showed his gratitude by deferring to her in all kinds of matters. Their son Caracalla also set great store by her advice; but this, apparently, was almost the only good point in a most vicious and criminal character, though it must be admitted that he was popular with his troops. After six years' reign he was secretly murdered, on campaign against the Parthians in Mesopotamia, by the treacherous prefect of the Prætorians, who had himself proclaimed as the Emperor Macrinus before his guilt was discovered.

Macrinus was defeated by the women. Not by Julia Domna, but by her family. After she had become Empress she had brought to Rome her sister Mæsa, who had married a proconsul, Julius Avitus, and had by him two daughters, Julia Soæmias and Julia Mamæa. Mæsa was, like Domna, both beautiful and clever; but she was also a very hard and calculating woman.

Caracalla, on his Mesopotamian campaign, had been accompanied as far as Antioch by his mother, his aunt Mæsa, and his two cousins. At Antioch Macrinus found them after Caracalla's murder, and he did not at first disturb them. Then his suspicions were aroused lest they might be plotting against him, and he sent them to Emesa, where Julia Domna, who was suffering from an internal malady, committed suicide (according to one story, by voluntary starvation), leaving Mæsa to carry on the family fortunes.

Mæsa was now a widow, and a rich one, for she had not wasted the opportunities of her position in the Imperial family. Her daughters had both been married, Soæmias to a Syrian, Varius Marcellus, who died just about this time, and Mamæa to another Syrian, Marcianus, a man of no account, who was already dead. Each sister had a son ; Soæmias Varius Bassianus, the future Emperor Elagabalus, and Mamæa Alexianus, later the Emperor Alexander Severus. The former boy was thirteen, the latter nine. The two had been initiated as priests at the temple of Elagabal ; the elder, through his grandmother's influence, and in spite of his youth, as high priest of the shrine.

Mæsa saw in her grandson, Varius Bassianus, a weapon against the usurper Macrinus. He was a beautiful child, for all of the Bassian blood had good looks ; and, she began to hint, he was closer to the Imperial line than was imagined. It was well known that no woman had been safe from Caracalla. There was, therefore, nothing inherently improbable in the suggestion, and Soæmias does not seem to have contradicted it. She was known to be a woman of voluptuous nature.

Mæsa's accumulated wealth was another weapon in her

Elagabalus, Roman Emperor.
From a bust in the Capitol, Rome.

favour, which she used freely to corrupt her opponents. Macrinus, for his part, managed his affairs badly. He was unsuccessful against the Parthians and retired to Antioch, where his attempts to restore order among his troops made him very unpopular. At length Mæsa determined to challenge him. She had her grandson proclaimed Emperor and marched on Antioch. A battle took place at Immæ, some twenty miles outside the city. Macrinus's better seasoned troops were winning when, it is said, both Mæsa and Soæmias threw themselves in the way of their retreating soldiers and rallied them, while the young pretender also entered the fray. Bodies of the enemy began to desert, Macrinus fled, and the battle was over, the beaten leader being finally captured and slain while attempting to make his way to Europe.

So, at the age of fourteen, the extraordinary effeminate and neurotic Syrian boy-priest was head of the Roman Empire, guided at first by two women, his grandmother and his mother. His official title was Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, and his supposed blood connection with a former Emperor undoubtedly secured him general recognition. There were, however, in a short time, seeds of trouble. The boy was much under the influence of Eutychianus, a man who had done a great deal to further his cause with the Army, and whom he made a prefect of the Prætorian Guards. His grandmother's domination irked him not a little, especially as she was anxious to reach Rome quickly, while to him the surroundings of his life in Asia were far too pleasant for him to leave them lightly for an unknown country.

When at last he arrived in Rome, more than a year

after his proclamation as Emperor, he soon began to lose ground. He could only see himself as Elagabalus, living representative of the sun-god; he built a splendid temple called the Elagabalium, on the Palatine Hill, installed in it the conical black stone in which Elagabal was worshipped as incarnate at Emesa and which he had transported to Rome, and compelled the nobility, furiously unwilling, to take part in the strange rites. His mother was his enthusiastic supporter; but his grandmother scented danger and the possibility of the loss of her power. She turned to her other daughter, Mamæa, and the boy Alexianus.

Mamæa was a woman of reputedly upright character, calculating like her mother, and not friendly to her nephew's religious zeal because, it is supposed, she felt a mild attraction towards Christianity. She was quite ready to help her mother's plans, especially as they involved the adoption by the young Emperor of his cousin Alexianus. Elagabalus consented to this, and Alexianus became Alexander Severus Cæsar, with the right of succession if there should be no direct heir, a most probable contingency.

Thereby Elagabalus sealed his doom, to which in any case his fantastic extravagances were leading him. His various marriages, including one with a Vestal Virgin—even the most irreligious Romans drew the line at that—his affairs with his male favourites, whom he promoted to high office, and his attempt to make Elagabal the god of the Empire, alienated all but a small minority. Mæsa's wealth, too, talked again. The Prætorians were mutinous, and, in an evil hour, Elagabalus, still only eighteen, determined to go to their camp and see them, accompanied by

his mother and by Alexander Severus. Mæsa and Mamæa were not on the scene, anticipating what was likely to happen. What did happen was the brutal murder of Elagabalus and Soæmias, and the proclamation of Alexander Severus as Emperor.

The character of Soæmias is overshadowed by that of her mother. She was, however, highly esteemed by her son, to whom in turn she gave a warm love. The honours he bestowed on her are said to have helped to discontent Mæsa. In particular, she is said to have taken her seat in the Senate. At any rate we know that she was made president of the *Conventus Matronarum*, which sat on the Quirinal and occupied itself with the manners, etiquette and dress of women. It was not, as sometimes represented, a female Senate.

Mæsa, having secured the throne for her younger grandson at the expense of the elder's life, died peacefully in her bed, treated always with the greatest respect by the new Emperor. Mamæa lived to the end of the reign, which ended in a mutiny in Gaul in A.D. 235, when she was slain together with Severus, just as Soæmias had been slain with Elagabalus. It is customary to write of Mamæa and her son as pure and upright people,* a thorough contrast to the mother and son who had gone before them. It is a curious commentary that Mamæa

* Mr. Hay's view of Alexander Severus, in his *Amazing Emperor Heliogabalus*, is very different, it may be noted, from the ordinary view. He points out that, if not actually responsible for his cousin's murder, he at least claimed a certain justification for it and asserted that he had been more than once in danger of death at the Emperor's hands. The historians of the reign either wrote under Severus, or, in the case of Lampridius, under Constantine the Great, who was bitterly hostile to a Syrian religion competing with Christianity. They therefore exalted Severus at the expense of his cousin.

did not hesitate, at Mæsa's instigation perhaps, to claim Caracalla as her son's father, and that Severus was quite content with the affiliation.

The ladies of the Bassian family had played their parts and gone; and nearly two centuries elapse before we come to the next of our examples. The Empire had experienced many changes by then. It had been given a new capital and had been Christianised, for his own purposes, by Constantine the Great. It had been divided into Eastern and Western Empires, and at times into more sections. But Theodosius the Great, a Spaniard by birth, had reunited it, to leave it again to be divided between his two sons, Arcadius and Honorius. Theodosius had also a daughter, Placidia, who was in Rome with her young brother Honorius when Alaric the Visigoth made his second attack on Italy, and captured and sacked the Imperial city in A.D. 410. Placidia fell into the enemy's hand. With Alaric was his brother-in-law Ataulphus, who succeeded him as King of the Visigoths and took Placidia to wife. Ataulphus evacuated Italy and was murdered in Spain, his widow returning to Italy, where Honorius was restored to power. She was married again, to her brother's general, Constantius, who succeeded Honorius on the throne, but reigned less than a year. Placidia was left as regent to her little son Valentinian during his long minority, and showed considerably more ability then either her brother before her or her son after.

A niece of Placidia was Pulcheria, daughter of Arcadius and elder sister to his heir, Theodosius II. Both children were minors when Arcadius died; but Pulcheria, when only fifteen, was given the title of Empress, and, not only

during the early years of Theodosius, but during his actual reign, governed the Eastern Empire for him. She was over fifty when his inglorious life came to an end, but not too old to marry, she considered, for she offered herself to Marcian, a man who had risen from the ranks to successful generalship, and who now accepted the Empire as her colleague. She died at the age of fifty-four, leaving behind her an admirable reputation.

After these two good women came two others of far less worthy character. Marcian's successor as Eastern Emperor was the Dacian, Leo I, whose wife Verina had considerable sway over him. Their elder daughter, Ariadne, was given in marriage to a petty chief from the robber tribe of the Isaurians, in Southern Asia Minor, whom Leo found useful as mercenaries in his army to fight the ever-encroaching German hordes on his frontiers to the north and west. Verina did not like her son-in-law Zeno, who was indeed an unpleasant person, and though she agreed to his succession on Leo's death in 474 soon started to conspire against him. She lamented the loss of her power in Leo's reign; and she had a lover, Patricius, who she thought would make a much better Emperor than Zeno. She brought about a revolution, and Zeno fled from Constantinople. But Verina's schemes were frustrated by her own brother, Basiliscus, who had aided her at first, only to seize the Empire himself and to put Patricius to death. Basiliscus quickly became unpopular, and a counter-revolution restored Zeno to the throne. At the suggestion of his favourite, Illus, Zeno banished his mother-in-law to a nunnery in Isauria—which was a fairly mild punishment for her treason.

Ariadne must have retained some affection for her mother, since, though she hated Illus, she ingratiated herself with him sufficiently to persuade him to have Verina recalled to Court. Then a new combination arose, Verina and Illus. They set up another candidate for the throne. Zeno, however, this time speedily defeated the rebels: Verina died in her flight, and Illus was finally captured and beheaded, together with the pretender he had helped to put forward.

Zeno lived another seven years, dying in 491. He left Ariadne childless; but she was not minded to resign what power she had had, held in check though it was while Verina and Illus were alive. She clothed herself in her Imperial robes, and with a large escort went to the Hippodrome, the great place for popular gatherings of all kinds in Constantinople. She was received with acclamation by the mob, and addressing them, urged them to choose an upright man as Emperor. She suggested the name of Anastasius the Silentiary (privy councillor); and the mob agreed. That she knew what she was doing was soon proved. Anastasius was, though somewhat advanced in years, a well-preserved and cultured man, and before long she had married him, so retaining her position as Empress.

In one respect she was disappointed in him. He had religious views which did not commend themselves to the Patriarch of Constantinople or the general body of the Orthodox. After becoming Emperor he tried to give expression to his views, and decreed that, in future, to the *Trisagion** (the song of the angels which a fortunate boy,

* "Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, pity us!"
Anastasius had apparently by degrees developed into a Monophysite (see p. 83) since Ariadne guaranteed his suitability as Emperor.

caught up to Heaven to overhear, brought down to earth in the reign of Theodosius II) should be added the words "who wast crucified for us." So strong was the outcry against this heretical doctrine concerning the persons of the Trinity that Constantinople rose in revolt. Anastasius prudently withdrew his decree, however, and saved his throne.

Two Empresses called Zoe left their mark on Byzantine history. One was at first concubine, and later fourth wife of the philosophic, if much-married, Leo VI, and mother of Constantine Porphyrogenitus, the literary Emperor, during whose minority she was a wise and firm regent. The other was a more remarkable character. Born near the end of the tenth century A.D., she was daughter of Constantine VIII, and at an already mature age was forced by her father on a certain Romanus, whom he rewarded by making him his heir. Romanus and Zoe had six years of reign together, he mismanaging affairs of state while he gave her her own way in most matters. She was clever, unscrupulous and exceedingly vain, and has been compared to our Queen Elizabeth. When Romanus died, though over fifty, she looked for another husband, and chose a young courtier from Paphlagonia, who became Emperor as Michael IV. He died of a complication of illnesses eight years later. He had a nephew, also Michael, and Zoe thought that, if he was too young to be her husband, at least he might be her son. But the youth had ambitions to rule alone, and she had to get rid of him very soon.

Zoe was now sixty-two, but not tired of married life. There was at Court a middle-aged rake, Constantine Monomachus, reputed to have been her lover thirty years

before, when her first husband was alive. To him she offered her mature hand, and he accepted it, becoming Constantine IX. Their joint reign was vexed by many rebellions, but at least they did not suffer the so common Imperial fate of assassination, dying peacefully. Being childless, they left the throne to Zoe's younger sister, Theodora, a rather remarkable old lady of seventy. She had been a nun for most of her life, but contrived to rule with some ability until her death two years later. If she could in no way be compared with her famous namesake, who is the subject of Chapter IV, she did not disgrace her position as Empress.

Early British history does not fail to produce at least one example of a woman worthy to be classed among the dominant of her sex. It was the Romans who gave her her chance of proving her character; but the price they exacted for this was her life. Boadicea, or Boudicca, or Bodicca, as some prefer to call her, was the widowed queen of the Iceni, a warlike tribe inhabiting Norfolk and Suffolk, with their capital at the modern Caistor, three miles south-east of Norwich. Her husband had experienced trouble with the conquering Romans, and at his death, thinking to protect his considerable wealth and his family, left them to the Emperor's care. That Emperor was Nero; but Nero was not responsible for what happened. His officials, the representatives of civilisation in Britain, disgraced themselves by laying their hands on the late king's wealth, beating the widow, and subjecting her daughters to outrage.

Boadicea waited for her opportunity of revenge, which came when the military governor of Britain, in A.D. 61,

crossed over to Anglesey in an unsuccessful attempt to add that island to his province. A great rising of the Britons took place, with the Queen of the Iceni at their head. They sacked the Roman settlements at Camalodunum (Colchester) and Verulanium (St. Albans), and advanced on London. The Governor Paulinus, hurrying back, had insufficient forces to save London, which also fell. Altogether it was computed that seventy thousand of the Romans and their British adherents were slain.

But Paulinus was at last reinforced and manœuvred the vastly more numerous Britons—a hundred and twenty thousand to his ten thousand, according to a Roman account—into a position where numbers could not tell against skill, and inflicted a tremendous disaster on them. Boadicea took poison rather than fall into Roman hands. Her country was mercilessly ravaged, and her capital was turned into a Roman settlement, Venta Icenorum, the site of which is at the present day being excavated.

The cruel punishment meted out to the defeated Britons brought its retribution, for the civil governor did not agree with the methods of Paulinus, and after Nero had sent a representative to inquire into matters the military governor was recalled from his post.

Boadicea was a woman more of the type of the Scythian Tomyris than of the Roman and Byzantine Empresses at whom we have been looking. She is a fighter, not an intriguer; a patriot, not a self-seeker. Like Tomyris, she is rather shadowy. But we have a picture of her by the historian Dio Cassius: a great, tall, stern-featured woman, with red hair falling to her waist, riding to battle in her chariot with a heavy chain of twisted gold about her

neck, and haranguing the British host in her deep tones on the wrongs they had suffered from the Romans.

. . . . .

We now come to the fuller-length portraits of women who seem to have deserved the epithet dominant. Obviously the number might easily have been increased manifold, and might have included a greater "diversity of creatures." It might almost have taken in, for instance, that strange phenomenon Emily Hart, from Flintshire, who rose from domestic servant and girl about town to wield an influence over Sir William Hamilton, British Ambassador at Naples, which "exceeded all belief," and over Nelson a sway which was a scandal to their contemporaries. But though Emily Hart became Lady Hamilton and, fortified by the friendship of Maria Carolina, Queen of Naples, undoubtedly had a share in the direction of British policy in the Mediterranean, she was dominant by little else than her beauty: that beauty which her elderly husband, in a letter recently discovered, described as "exquisite," and which made Nelson, when someone in his presence ventured to compare her with England's leading actress, mutter indignantly: "Damn Mrs. Siddons!"

Emma Hamilton was not of the stuff to govern men by the force of her personality. She was, in fact—though one hates to say this of so lovely a piece of human nature—deficient in brain.

CHAPTER II

CLEOPATRA THE MAGNIFICENT

Last (except for a daughter of whom we know very little) of numerous princesses all called Cleopatra, and all of Macedonian blood, the greatest bearer of the name did not start life with obvious advantages whereby to make her way easily to historical fame. She was, indeed, a child of the immensely wealthy Ptolemy, thirteenth of the house of Lagos to rule over Egypt. But, apart from his wealth, he was a hard-drinking, frivolous weakling, who prided himself above all on his skill with the flute, which he exhibited at public competitions, gaining from his derisive subjects the nickname of Auletes, "the Fluteplayer."

Ptolemy's hold upon his throne was very insecure. His predecessor had bequeathed Egypt to the Roman people, and it cost him £1,500,000 in bribes at Rome to get himself recognised as king. Then his unpopularity with his heavily over-taxed people caused them to rise up and drive him into exile. Again he bribed Rome, this time to the tune of £2,500,000, when a force was sent to restore him, of which the advance-guard was commanded by a young cavalry officer destined one day to be the famous general Marcus Antonius.

Ptolemy had left behind him in his flight from

Alexandria his wife, three daughters, and two small sons. The wife had died and the eldest daughter, Berenike, had claimed the throne and taken to herself a husband, for which, on her father's return, she had paid the penalty with her life. Then Ptolemy settled down in peace with the rest of his family for the few more years that remained to him.

Cleopatra, the second of his daughters, was about fourteen when Ptolemy came back. As his reign up to that point had been both short and troubled, and previous to his accession he had been but an illegitimate scion of the royal house, living in obscurity in Syria, it is difficult to imagine how Cleopatra managed to acquire the beginnings of that education for which she was later noted. At the palace in Alexandria, no doubt, she received the benefit of competent Greek tutors. Her most remarkable accomplishment was her skill at languages; but she must have been generally cultured to get the hold which she did over Julius Cæsar, and even over Antony, who was not the mere soldier his enemies made him out to be.

In 51 B.C. Ptolemy Auletes died, leaving his throne to the eighteen-year-old Cleopatra, in conjunction with her brother Ptolemy XIV, seven years her junior, whom, by the Egyptian royal custom, she was to marry. There was soon dissension. The boy was swayed by the counsels of his eunuch-guardian Potheinos and his Greek tutor Theodotos, whose great desire was to banish Cleopatra and rule Egypt for themselves. For three years they refrained from active steps, but then, on Ptolemy attaining his official majority, they persuaded him to drive her out of the country. She fled to the Eastern frontier, and—

Cleopatra.

From an antique sculpture in the Capitol, Rome.

since none of the Lagid family ever seemed to lack money —raised an army to fight for her rights, like a true Macedonian princess. Her brother's forces marched to meet her.

Now comes the startling introduction of Julius Cæsar into her story. There was a prelude to his arrival upon the scene. Cæsar had just won his great victory over his former ally and son-in-law at Pharsalia, and the defeated Pompey came in swift flight to Egypt, relying on the fact that Ptolemy Auletes had been his guest in Rome, and hoping for a return of hospitality. He reckoned without the baseness of the new Ptolemy's advisers. Putting off in a boat from the ship which had brought him from Greece, he was treacherously murdered, before he could land, by a renegade Roman in the Egyptian service. The chief instigator of the crime was Theodotos, who suggested that Ptolemy might thus gain the favour of Cæsar.

But Cæsar was not the man to welcome such a deed against a fellow-Roman with whom he had once been on the friendliest of terms. Arriving in Alexandria, he turned with horror from the hapless Pompey's head, sent him as a peace-offering from the young king. Soon, too, he was involved in trouble in Alexandria. He had brought little over four thousand troops with him, but the townspeople were much incensed at even so small a display of Roman power in their midst. Riots took place, and some of Cæsar's men were killed in the streets.

Putting on a bold face, however, Cæsar ordered Ptolemy and his sister to disband their armies and appear before him for a settlement of their quarrel. Ptolemy's advisers disobeyed and brought their twenty thousand

troops to Alexandria, where Cæsar, who had occupied the palace, was reduced to a state of siege.

Cleopatra, on the other hand, determined to obey. She left her army on the frontier and sailed for Alexandria. Then, making her way at evening in a boat, she landed and dramatically entered the palace, wrapped up in a bed-sack and carried on the shoulders of a faithful servant to the very presence of Cæsar.

Did she trust to the notorious susceptibility of the great Roman to feminine charms, and the appeal of her fresh youth to his fifty-four years? If so, she was right. He fell at once, and next morning summoned Ptolemy before him. Unwillingly the boy came, and, in spite of his violent protests, was compelled to listen to a judgment dividing the royal power again between him and Cleopatra.

Cæsar detained Ptolemy in the palace, where he had now all of the family except the younger girl, Arsinoe, between whom and Cleopatra there was a bitter hatred. To the elder sister's enemies Arsinoe was a likely substitute on the throne, and her escape from the palace was welcomed by them.

The forced reconciliation between Ptolemy and Cleopatra did not last. Cæsar's dangerous position in Alexandria was somewhat relieved by the arrival of reinforcements, but he was still vastly outnumbered. A regular war was in progress in the town and the harbour, in which he once nearly lost his life. Finally he decided to release Ptolemy, for which clemency one reason at least was that Cleopatra was now his mistress.

Ptolemy gained nothing by his freedom. More troops arrived for Cæsar from Syria, and a great battle took place

outside Alexandria, in which the Egyptians were totally defeated and the king lost his life. The war was at an end.

The victor conformed to Egyptian custom by associating with Cleopatra on the throne her still junior brother, Ptolemy the Younger, who was only eleven. But he made no secret of his own connection with her. In her company he spent no less than nine months, making the tour of Egypt in magnificent style, and spending money—her money rather than his—most lavishly on banquets and entertainments wherever they went. Their display was a byword for years to come.

Cæsar found it almost impossible to break his mistress's spell, which was both physical and intellectual. At last, however, he dared not remain any longer, lest he should lose his position entirely. Further campaigns awaited him, and he tore himself away, leaving her with a memento of their association, the child Cæsarion, of whom he was the acknowledged father.

Cleopatra's rule in Egypt was firmly maintained by her lover's loan of three of his legions, and for two years she governed in peace. Then he sent for her to come to him in Rome, to the great scandal of the majority of his countrymen, though his followers flocked to see her in the villa in which he established her across the Tiber.

The Dictator's wife Calpurnia was still living; but there were rumours about that he intended to marry Cleopatra also, after a due change of law to permit him to do so. In fact, there were still more extraordinary tales of the extent to which his infatuation for her was prepared to make him go, such as setting up an empire in the East and ruling from Alexandria with her as his consort. Some

modern historians give this amount of belief to the suggestion, that they think Cleopatra was urging Cæsar towards the idea.

Assassins ended all such dreams. The Ides of March, 44 B.C., drove Cleopatra in haste to Egypt, where she resumed her rule with her son Cæsarion—her brother and nominal husband, Ptolemy the Younger, who had come with her to Italy, somehow mysteriously disappearing. Such an opportunity to impute murder was not lost by those writers who later combined to blacken the fame of Egypt's queen.

The first of the two great romances in Cleopatra's life was over; and she was still but twenty-four or twenty-five. It had been a curious, almost improbable, liaison which she had had with that signal genius who had so nearly jeopardised his triumphant career for love of her in Egypt, and had contributed to the downfall of his apparently solid power by his bondage to her in Rome. It was, no doubt, with his thirty-three years' superiority in age, more of a romance for him than for her, though he carefully refrained from mentioning her name more than once, and that casually, in his published writings. It has been questioned whether it was a romance for her at all. It was love of power, not love of him, it is suggested, that drew her to him. That she was devoted to their son, however, is not denied.

The second of the great romances began three years after the end of the first. Those years were full of anxiety for Cleopatra. A renewal of civil war was imminent between dead Cæsar's friends and his enemies. She could not afford to be on the losing side, or Egypt would be taken from her. At last, after hostilities had actually

broken out, a triumvirate was formed between Cæsar's grand-nephew Octavian, his firm adherent Antony, and Lepidus, another prominent member of the Cæsarian party. Cleopatra decided to range herself with them, and set out with the Egyptian fleet to join the two first-named. A tempest intervened, and the battle of Philippi was fought and won without her. Would her gesture be sufficient to convince the triumvirs of her sincerity?

Antony's arrival in the East gave her the chance of testing this. His main object was to collect money, for Octavian and he had their victorious troops to pay. He sent a message to Cleopatra to meet him at Tarsus, and with no excessive speed she obeyed. Antony's messenger, is is said, assured her of a good reception. But she determined to impress him, not forgetting to bring with her ample evidences of her wealth.

They had met before; possibly in 55, when Antony helped to restore Ptolemy Auletes to his kingdom, certainly in 45-44, when Cleopatra was at Cæsar's villa outside Rome, courted by all his friends. But now in 41 they faced each other on different terms. Antony was one of the two most powerful men in the world. Cleopatra was a free woman, a queen in her own right.

The encounter is too celebrated to need description again. Conquered by her charm and dazzled by her magnificence, Antony could do nothing too much for her. He accepted her excuse for not appearing before Philippi, took part with her in splendid entertainments at Tarsus, and finally let her depart for Egypt, promising to rejoin her there. He consented, too, to the perpetration of a vindictive crime. In the great temple of "Diana of the

Ephesians" there was living Cleopatra's sister Arsinoe, who, after Cæsar's success in Alexandria, had been kept a prisoner, to walk in his first triumph at Rome in 46, and had been subsequently allowed to retire to sanctuary at Ephesus. But Cleopatra, unable to forget their feud, had her dragged out of the temple and put to death.

Antony kept his promise, and at the end of the year came to Alexandria, to spend a winter of most extravagant revelry with her. As with Cæsar, Cleopatra laid herself out in every way to captivate her guest; and it was an easier task with Antony, at once a simpler and a younger man than the Dictator had been. If Cæsar could not resist her arts, still less could Antony.

But again came the necessity of a break. Antony should have been attending to the war against the Parthians, to wage which Cæsar had died too soon. Instead, in his absence, they had overrun Asia Minor and Syria; while in Rome his affairs, entrusted to his brother Lucius and his wife Fulvia, had been so badly mismanaged that an open breach between him and Octavian looked unavoidable. Antony roused himself and sailed for Asia Minor, where he found the position for the moment hopeless; for Athens, where he had his last interview with Fulvia;* and ultimately for Brundisium, where Octavian met him, and a reconciliation was effected.

One of the conditions of peace between the great rivals was that Antony, left a widower by Fulvia's death, should take to wife Octavia, sister to Octavian. To this he consented; and for nearly four years he left Cleopatra

* See p. 21.

alone. The romance seemed at an end. She had to be content with what satisfaction she could extract from the arrival of twins, a boy and a girl.

In Antony's absence Cleopatra's history practically ceases, and it does not begin again until 37, when he renewed his agreement with Octavian and set out East once more to deal with the Parthians. His wife Octavia, a good and loyal woman, accompanied him as far as Corcyra, whence he sent her home. There was no quarrel; but he never set eyes on her again.

Plutarch's explanation is that Antony's old passion for Cleopatra blazed up anew. Without going to Egypt, he made for Syria, and from there sent her a message to come to him at Antioch. She arrived, and the infatuation was worse than ever. It is true that he obtained from her a liberal contribution towards war expenses (which was a legitimate excuse for an interview with her); but he made her in return vast gifts of territory, of which he had no right to dispose, recognised her twin children by him, Alexander Helios and Cleopatra Selene, and sent her home to bear him another son, to whom was given the name of Ptolemy.

His campaign against the Parthians was disastrous. He sought consolation in Cleopatra's arms, and then took her with him to Syria. There a letter reached him from the faithful Octavia, mother of two children by him. She begged him to come to Athens, where she had money, troops, and equipment for him. Cleopatra, says Plutarch, wept and starved herself, and implored Antony through friends not to be so cruel as to cast her aside, who could not live without him. She won. Antony ordered his

wife back to Rome, and himself returned with Cleopatra to Alexandria.

Octavian, in whom no characteristic was more developed than prudence, did not immediately resent this gross insult to his sister. He awaited the time when Antony should fill up the cup—which he did in more senses than one, according to the historians. These are all partisans of the future Emperor Augustus; but really there is some excuse for their attempts to explain Antony's mad career by an intellectual breakdown caused by debauchery. Having shown a remnant of his military skill in a campaign against the Armenians, and captured their king, Artavasdes, in 34, he celebrated a gorgeous triumph in the streets of Alexandria, with the spectacle, horrifying to all Romans, of Cleopatra, robed as Isis, seated on a golden throne, and receiving homage from all. He proceeded to divide up almost the whole of Rome's Eastern Empire between her and her children by Cæsar and himself.

Still Octavian held back, contenting himself, when Antony tried to get these assignments of territory confirmed in Rome, with preventing the point being brought up in the Senate.

At the end of 33, when the compact made at Brundisium was due to expire, Octavian struck his blow. Antony's friends, of whom there were many in Rome even now, owing to jealousy against Octavian, pressed for the ratification of his acts. They were defeated, whereon both consuls and about four hundred Senators left to join Antony in the East.

They found him at Ephesus; and with him, to their disgust, "the Egyptian woman." Antony advised her to leave. She refused, and with her ever-ready gold bought

for herself sufficient supporters. So she stayed at Ephesus, and from there accompanied her lover to Samos and to Athens. With the Athenians she was well pleased, and they with her. She loaded them with gifts, and they voted her a statue on the Acropolis, beside that of Antony, who was always popular with them.

Antony's next step was to repudiate Octavia and have her turned out of his house in Rome, where she was living with their children and Fulvia's. Not even yet did Octavian act, his excuse being that he was short of money; while Antony had always Cleopatra behind him. It was not until January 31st, 31 B.C., that he felt in a position to declare war, and then so leisurely were his movements that over seven months elapsed before the decisive battle took place off the Greek coast.

Actium settled the fate of the Empire and of Antony's and Cleopatra's ambitions. The conduct of the two, or rather the motive for that conduct, on the fatal September 2nd, is a matter of controversy. The sea-fight was still undecided, when Cleopatra, who was at the head of the Egyptian fleet, lying behind Antony's, was observed to be cutting right through the contending ships and speeding south. Antony recognised her flagship, and set off in pursuit. She allowed him to catch up, and took him on board, where for three days he sat speechless, with bowed head. At the southernmost point of Greece they halted to wait for other fugitives, who brought news of the loss of the fleet. Eventually they reached Parætonium, on the Egyptian coast, whence Antony sent Cleopatra to Alexandria, while he attempted to pick up some troops he had left behind as garrison of Western Egypt.

Whether Cleopatra's flight from Actium was pre-arranged with Antony, or whether she was seized with sudden panic (alarmed by unfavourable omens, said some, and fearing for her children's safety) and fled without consulting him, but stayed to take him with her, she showed no lack of courage on reaching Alexandria. She preceded the news of disaster and took precautions so that, when it arrived, she could punish with death any attempt at sedition, or any expression of joy on the part of her enemies.

Antony, poor fool, finding that his garrison had deserted, tried to commit suicide. Prevented from this, he set off for Alexandria, where more bad news reached him: that a week after the loss of his fleet, the fine army which he had left in Greece had surrendered to Octavian. The cost of his desertion at Actium was now clear to him; and what remained in him of the soldier was brought to the depths of humiliation. Another side of his curious character asserted itself. He had managed in the course of his life to acquire a tincture of Greek culture. The story of Timon of Athens, hater of mankind, came back to him, and, shutting himself up in a cell overlooking the harbour of Alexandria, he brooded in solitude over the ingratitude and wickedness of the human race.

Cleopatra spent no time in vain melancholy. The dream of an Eastern Empire might be shattered, but Egypt and her wealth still remained. Egypt, of course, might fall, as all the rest of the Empire had now fallen, into Octavian's hands; but wealth was always a power. She had a scheme for dragging the Egyptian fleet over the Isthmus of Suez into the Red Sea and seeking a new kingdom somewhere south, with her treasures, her children,

her friends, and all else that was left to her. The hostility of the Arabs in the neighbourhood of the Isthmus, who burnt a portion of her fleet, defeated this scheme. Escape that way was therefore cut off. But despair could do no good. Terms *might* be made with Octavian. In any case, it was better to get what could be got out of the present.

She went to the hermit Antony, and prevailed on him to leave his cell and revive the old gay times which they had spent together in Alexandria. The winter after Actium was accordingly marked by sumptuous entertainments, with an added recklessness caused by the shadow of death.

At last Octavian, hampered as ever, even after his great victory, by the lack of funds, was enabled by extensive borrowings to put himself in a position to start for Egypt. In Syria he was sought by envoys from both his enemies. Cleopatra sent him the royal insignia of Egypt and implored that the country might be left for her children to rule. Antony only asked that he might be allowed to spend his remaining years as a private citizen in Athens.

To Antony Octavian returned a curt demand for unconditional surrender. To Cleopatra he is alleged to have replied that she might obtain reasonable terms by killing or driving out Antony. Whether he can really have put the case so bluntly is doubtful; but, as he showed later, his great desire was to take Cleopatra alive. He wanted her wealth, and a splendid figure to adorn his triumph.

In the summer of 30 negotiations came to an end. The lovers knew that they must prepare for Octavian's arrival. All avenues of flight were denied to them. East and west of Egypt there were hostile armies, and the sea to the

north was dominated by the hostile fleet. The south offered no safe asylum. There only remained to make a last stand at Alexandria.

Cleopatra had long been contemplating how to die. She had experimented with various poisons, it was said, on condemned criminals, and had satisfied herself that one was painless. She had built herself a tomb, and had collected there all her treasures, that they might perish with her body in a vast holocaust—news of which plan reached Octavian and led him to send to her, secretly, fresh messages of encouragement to live and look for his mercy. Could she believe him? And was anything to be expected from an interview with him? There were her children, and for their sake she must wait to see what might happen.

On July 31st the enemy were outside Alexandria. Antony had discovered a spark of his manhood, and had defeated the advance cavalry in a skirmish, speeding back to the palace to receive Cleopatra's congratulations. On his last night he supped with an appearance of brave spirit, and talked of "a glorious death or victory." But on August 1st victory was soon ruled out. In the harbour the Egyptian fleet surrendered without fighting. On land his horsemen went over to Octavian, and the foot were routed. Nor did the glorious death come his way. He left the field alive, and returned to Alexandria, to find Cleopatra had left the palace. So she, too, was a traitor! In his despair he might well be pardoned for thinking so.

She was not, though both he and she had long been haunted with a suspicion that one might betray the other. She had known of his distrust, and when the defeat was

certain had fled to her tomb and barred herself in, rather than face him. She was reported to him dead by suicide. Relenting, she sent to let him know she was still alive. But it was too late. Antony had believed the first report, and had attempted suicide himself, not dying at once, but inflicting a fatal wound. He had himself carried in a litter to her tomb, where were only Cleopatra and her two handmaids, Iris and Charmion, immortalised for their devotion to her to the end. The three women drew the dying man up by ropes to the upper story of the tomb, and there, in her arms, he breathed his last.

Antony was hardly dead when Octavian's emissaries were at the tomb. They managed to effect an entrance. In vain Cleopatra caught up a dagger, which was snatched from her hand. Taking precautions against a further attempt at suicide, the emissaries bade her still hope for leniency from their master.

Permission was sent her to bury Antony's body; but her paroxysms of grief, which led her to refuse all food, were checked by the hint that it would be the worse for her children if she died.

Then came a message that Octavian would visit her in person. She received him without any cajolery, meanly dressed, and her face disfigured with weeping. All arts, she knew, would be wasted on this cold young man. She excused herself for the past and begged for pity; and she gave him a list of her treasures. He was polite, and assured her of kinder treatment than she had hoped from him. So he left her, convinced that she still desired to live, and had her conveyed to the palace under guard.

But he had made her no promise about her children.

Cæsarion she believed safely out of the way—wherein she was mistaken. In the palace, however, were her offspring by Antony, the twins Alexander Helios and Cleopatra Selene, and the little Ptolemy. And now the dread rumour came to her that Octavian's intention was to send them away with her in three days' time. This, then, was the fate reserved for them by Octavian's kindness: to figure in his triumph, as her sister Arsinoe had figured in Cæsar's, as so many noble captives had figured in other triumphs in Rome, as the Armenian king had figured in Antony's at Alexandria. She, at any rate, would not be led in triumph. Better death!

So came her famous suicide, after a visit to Antony's tomb by Octavian's permission. She returned to the palace, and, clothed in her royal robes, ate her last meal, at the conclusion of which a basket of figs was brought to her. Herein was concealed, known to her, but unknown to her guards, the medium of the poison she had chosen as the most painless; the "asp"—probably, it is now said, the little horned viper of Egypt. She applied it to her arm, and died. A messenger from Octavian, alarmed at a letter he had just received from her asking to be buried in Antony's tomb, arrived too late. Cleopatra was beyond the reach of all humiliation.

Octavian ordered her body to be buried as she had desired. He also spared her three younger children. But Cæsarion, who had attempted to escape, was betrayed by his Greek tutor and was brought back to Alexandria to be put to death. Cleopatra's wealth fell into Octavian's hands. That much of her he had secured.

. . . . .

Cleopatra's second great romance was finished. It had lasted, with an interval, eleven years, and left the lovers side by side in the grave. It has been hailed as the supreme romance of ancient history. It certainly had unique features. It might have been a mere intrigue, indeed began as such. But it not only developed into a wonderful love story, with almost appropriate end;* Cleopatra's ambition also gave it tremendous political significance. She made Antony, as she was suspected of trying to make Cæsar, erect an Eastern Empire, governed from Alexandria. She did not rest content with saving Egypt from being swallowed in the Roman maw. She caused the war to be carried into the enemy's country, and for a time at least wrested vast territories from Rome. She failed because the Romans of her day were not to be beaten by any foe, even when that foe had Roman aid. She failed; but she failed, as she had lived, magnificently. The significance of her attempt was not lost on those who came after her. The struggle between East and West went on and on, and the East had its fair share of victories.

As to what manner of woman it was who achieved so much, it is not altogether in Cleopatra's disfavour that we have only the evidence of enemies, for we therefore know that we only hear the worst of her, and make the reasonable deductions. She cannot be cleared of the vindictiveness and cruelty which marked all the prominent women of her

---

* Dryden, in his usually underrated *All for Love*, makes the dying Antony say to Cleopatra:

> "Think, we have had a glorious day,
> And Heaven did kindly to delay the storm
> Just to our close of evening. Ten years' love,
> And not a moment lost. . . ."

ancestral race. Her cruelty extended itself to the members of her own family; against which, however, it must be put that she was a fond mother. As she had two lovers, it is perhaps not unnatural that those who wished to blacken her should assign her many. But there is no proof whatever of any liaisons besides the famous two with Cæsar and with Antony.

It is much to be lamented that time has caused the disappearance of two statues of Cleopatra of which we hear mention in her lifetime: one placed by Cæsar in the temple he erected in Rome to Venus Genetrix, legendary ancestress of the Julian *gens*, and the other voted by the Athenians and presumably set up in the Acropolis. We have the bust assigned to her in the British Museum, which agrees well in profile with her numerous representations on coins. The chief characteristics of her face to be gathered therefrom are a long aquiline nose and a low forehead. In spite of later legends, due to the idea of "the Egyptian woman," she was very likely, as a Macedonian, not dark, but fair. (This is not to be taken as indication of any preference for blondes.) She was enthusiastic in the use of cosmetics, unguents, and all supposed aids to beauty. It is gathered from the manner of her introduction to Cæsar that she was small, rather than big, for otherwise she would have been awkwardly concealed in a bed-sack.

Chief of all her weapons, on the testimony of those who wrote as little good as they could of her, were a sweet-toned voice and a charm of manner. At the height of her unpopularity in Rome she was credited with preternatural powers of fascination. Octavian declared his brother-in-law to have been "bewitched by the accursed woman."

It can quite well be understood that Octavian, admirable Emperor as he afterwards proved to be, failed to appreciate Cleopatra's secret, which lay not in her alone but in the men also whom she " bewitched." There was no affinity between Octavian and Cleopatra.

CHAPTER III

ZENOBIA, QUEEN OF THE EAST

THE story of Zenobia* of Palmyra is indeed hard to disentangle from the mass of contradictions in which it is involved. Inscriptions and coins survive to prove her greatness and her ambitions; and there is much about her in the works of historians of the Roman Empire. With regard to these historians, it has to be remembered that they are hostile witnesses, as little inclined to do justice to her as their predecessors were to be just to her illustrious forerunner in the struggle of the East to free itself from the bondage of Rome.

It is reported that Zenobia had an ardent admiration for the woman who anticipated her own vain, but for some brief time successful, attempt to drive the Romans out of the East, and to divide with them the empire of the known world. She liked to emulate her magnificence, as in the matter of "Cleopatran" plates and dishes, the splendour of the Egyptian's table service having been renowned. She was said to have claimed descent from the family of the Lagidæ, and even from Cleopatra herself. Such a claim, if made, would mean that among her ancestors was included

* At the risk of being called pedantic, I would note that her name was not, as it is commonly pronounced, Zĕnōbia, but Zēnŏbia. In Arab tradition she is known as Zabba, daughter of Amr ben Zarib, which recalls her original name of Bath Zabbai (see p. 63).

Zenobia, Captive.

From a modern statue by Miss Hofmer.

one of the children of Cleopatra by Antony, who were spared by Octavian after his defeat of the two lovers. One of these, the daughter Cleopatra Selene, married Juba, afterwards King of Mauretania. She bore him a son called Ptolemy, who succeeded his father, and was in A.D. 40 invited to Rome by the Emperor Caligula and there hospitably murdered. Whether he had any issue is not known.

The sons of Antony and Cleopatra, Alexander Helios and Ptolemy, after their parents' death were taken to Rome and brought up by that most magnanimous of women, Octavia, Antony's legal wife, subsequently going to Mauretania to live at the Court of Juba and Cleopatra Selene. What happened to them afterwards is again not known.

It is thus not impossible that Zenobia was a descendant of Cleopatra the Great. But there is no proof; and Palmyra, where Zenobia was probably born and where we first hear of her existence, is sufficiently remote from Mauretania to make us ask for evidence of the connection.

A personal description of Zenobia is given by the historian Trebellius Polligo, who wrote under Constantine the Great and may have derived his information second-hand, but cannot possibly have seen her unless it was in extreme old age. On Pollio's description Gibbon bases his in the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, which we may quote:

> Zenobia was esteemed the most lovely as well as the most heroic of her sex. She was of dark complexion (for in speaking of a lady these trifles become of importance). Her teeth were of a pearly whiteness, and her large black eyes sparkled with uncommon fire, tempered by the most attractive sweetness. Her voice was strong and harmonious.

The writer of the article on Palmyra in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* says that Pollio's description of her looks, together with her unusual physical endurance and the frank commanding manners which secured her authority in camp and desert, point emphatically to Zenobia's Arab rather than Syrian descent. It was Arab blood which contributed most to the aristocracy of Palmyra. Zenobia's husband, Odænathus, was head of the chief Palmyran aristocratic family, and no doubt took to wife one of good lineage.

. . . . .

Palmyra was situated in an oasis in the great desert which divides Syria from Irak, and is about half-way between Damascus and the Euphrates. Its earliest known name was Tadmor, and as Tadmor its ruins are known to-day. The ascription of its foundation to Solomon, who " built Tadmor in the wilderness " (2 Chronicles viii, 4), is now considered an error, due to the confusion of Tadmor with Thamar, in Idumæa.

At whatever time its first foundation occurred, Tadmor appears to have come into being as an Arab trading depôt on the caravan route between the Mediterranean, the Euphrates, and the Persian Gulf. It was certainly to this caravan trade, on which it levied heavy toll, that it owed its growth into a city. The district under its control, later called Palmyrene, spread to include the whole of the Syrian desert from Cœlosyria, the valley between the two Lebanon ranges, to the Euphrates. The inhabitants, originally Arab, then Arab and Syrian, received accessions of Jews (especially after the fall of Jerusalem), of Greeks and various Western Asiatics, and ultimately of Romans or

of the people of mixed blood that called themselves Romans. The blood of the Palmyrans must itself have got mixed; but the civilisation, even when Greek and Roman influence increased, was of an Eastern type. The great families, says the already quoted writer in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, remained essentially Oriental under the veneer of Greek culture and Roman citizenship.

The first recorded contact of Palmyra with Rome was when Antony in 41 B.C., thirsting for gold wherewith to pay his part of the debt to the victorious troops at the battle of Philippi, reached Syria and looked about him for sources from which it might be obtained. He heard of the wealth of Palmyra, with its great merchants and its workers in gold and silver ornaments, and determined to make it his own. As an excuse for invading Palmyrene he took the neutrality of the inhabitants in the war between Rome and Parthia, which it was part of his Eastern mission to continue. The Palmyrans had good cause to remain neutral; for the savage Parthians were their next-door neighbours and could far more easily trouble them than Rome could.

Still, the excuse served, and Antony's troops set out on their march towards the wealthy city. But their general had reckoned without the opposition which he was to meet. Palmyra had a good army, which was very necessary to protect her, in particular from her neighbours. Like the Parthians, the Palmyrans were well equipped with both cavalry and bowmen, and understood desert warfare. It was the archers of Palmyra who checked the horsemen of Rome's greatest cavalry leader, and Antony gave up his attempt. Cleopatra soon diverted his attention in the autumn of this year.

For the moment Palmyra's independence was saved, and the little, though powerful, state continued to hold the balance between Rome and Parthia, trading with both impartially, with good profit to itself.

Gradually, however, with the establishment of Rome as an empire Palmyra was brought into its orbit. The stages are obscure, and inscriptions do not help in defining them. But in Nero's reign, at least, we know from Roman decrees that the tax ordinances of Palmyra were issued by the Imperial representatives in Syria. Financially Palmyra benefited by the connection. Rome was most desirous of keeping in as close touch as possible with the Euphrates, and Palmyra lay on the main route to the river.

An event which contributed not a little to the city's further advance was the fall of its principal rival in the south, Petra—"the rose-red city half as old as Time." This Arab state, founded by the Idumæans in early days, and built up by their successors the Nabathæans into a strong kingdom, collapsed before the Roman arms in Trajan's reign, and no longer was a competitor with Palmyra.

Trajan's armies also for a time relieved Palmyra from the menace across the Euphrates, when he wrested Mesopotamia from the Parthians. His successor, Hadrian, was compelled to surrender it, but it was later regained and in part organised as the Roman province of Osroene. The Parthians did not recover from the blow, and were ready to fall victims to Persian revolt which destroyed them as an empire not long before the birth of Zenobia.

With the waves of Roman power coming closer on her borders, Palmyra naturally felt the influence of Rome ever stronger. In A.D. 130 she first had the honour of a visit

from an Emperor. Hadrian came that year, was well received, and showed gracious favour in return. The city received the name of Hadrianopolis, or Hadriana Palmyra.

Early in the Third Century it had conferred on it the privilege of the *Jus Italicum*, binding it still closer to Rome. It was probably the Emperor Septimius Severus, while conducting the war against Parthia, who conferred this right and raised Palmyra to the rank of a Roman colony. He gave the leading family of the place the gift of Roman citizenship, when they assumed the front name of Septimius in his honour. Under his son Caracalla the Imperial favour continued, and Alexander Severus, reputed son of Caracalla,* elevated the Septimii to senatorial rank when he came East to combat the newly revived power of Persia, under Artaxerxes, founder of the Sassanid dynasty.

We are now approaching the approximate date of Zenobia's birth, and find Palmyra in a most flourishing condition, a favourite client of the Roman Empire, and in enjoyment of a very great measure of independence, not in any way inferior to that of the various kingdoms in alliance with Rome. The city itself can, to a certain extent, be reconstructed from its still magnificent remains. It had a circumference of about twelve miles, and its main street, the Grand Colonnade, was over four thousand feet in length. On either side of this ran a line of seven hundred and fifty columns of pink-white limestone, fifty-seven feet high, each with a bracket about half-way up for the support of statues. Inscriptions show that the statues were erected at various dates to eminent Palmyrans,

---

* See p. 30.

including Zenobia and her husband. The Colonnade was intersected in the middle by an arcade at right angles to it, of which the central arch still remains standing. There were numerous other columned streets, which probably had awnings over them as a protection against the fierce heat of the Syrian sun.

In the south-east of the city was the great Temple of the Sun, of which the ruins to-day cover 640,000 square feet and are a mile in circumference. The innermost shrine has a fine carved ceiling, still intact, though it is almost all of the building that is so.

The only rival to Palmyra among the ruins of Syria is Baalbek, about a hundred and fifteen miles distant, and north of Damascus. Here too there is a great Temple of the Sun, whence the name of the city under the Empire, Heliopolis. This temple is more recent than that at Palmyra, for it was built by order of Antoninus Pius, whereas the origin of the Palmyran temple is lost in obscurity.

The inscriptions show the buildings of Palmyra to have been the work of native architects, being in Western Aramaic. "That language," says Mommsen,* "which in the rest of Syria, and not less, after the exile, in Judæa, was the usual medium of private intercourse . . . maintained its ground in public as long as the city existed at all." Palmyra, as Mommsen points out, was exempt from the rule prevalent elsewhere in the Roman Empire of using officially only the two Imperial languages, Latin and Greek. But it became the custom to append to the Aramaic inscriptions a Greek translation.

The names of the inhabitants, where they survive, show

* *The Provinces of the Roman Empire.*

a strange medley of Arabic, Syrian, sometimes Jewish, and even Persian. Numerous Greek and Latin words bear witness to Western influence.

The religion of Palmyra was a mixture of Arabic and Syrian cults, as the deities' names prove. The chief god was Baal, identified with the Sun, and worshipped in the great temple dedicated to him.

Palmyra had an elected senate, and its municipal organisations resembled that of Greek towns under the Roman Empire, its officials having mostly Greek titles. It had, however, much greater independence, and its chief man was virtually a prince, nominated indeed by Rome, but chosen from the leading family.

We find in an inscription of A.D. 251 the name of Septimius Hairanes, son of Odænathus; and this man's son, Septimius Odænathus, in a six years later inscription is stated to be of consular rank—the distinction which Rome conferred on the head men of Palmyra. This family with the Roman "gentile" name of Septimius obviously obtained citizenship under Septimius Severus.

Odænathus, son of Hairanes, is said to have devoted himself in his youth to hunting in the mountains and the deserts, where no doubt he acquired that influence over the wandering Arabs which enabled him later to lead them so successfully to battle.

That Odænathus married Zenobia, whose original native name was Bath Zabbai, we know, but not when. At the time of his death she had borne him apparently three sons, and possibly daughters also. We do not, however, know these children's ages, so have no clue to the date of the marriage.

We have heard of Zenobia's race and of her looks. What else we hear of her, though derived from unfriendly sources, is much to her credit. Although fond of the chase and a warrior woman, she was a great student of both languages and history. She is said to have spoken, besides the Arabic of Palmyra, Greek, some Latin, Coptic, and later Egyptian. She took as her tutor the famous Longinus, best known for his work " On the Sublime."

Longinus is supposed to have been born at Athens, where he was brought up by his uncle Fronto, the rhetorician. After travelling much to visit noted philosophers, he returned to Athens and opened a school for philosophy, rhetoric, and grammar. Then he went east and made the acquaintance of Zenobia, who retained him at Palmyra to instruct her, and after her husband's death to be her chief adviser. As we shall see, Longinus's advice is reported ultimately to have brought about her ruin and his own death; but her choice of him as tutor at least showed her wisdom, for his was a great brain.

The events which led up to the prominence of Odænathus and Zenobia in Roman history were directly connected with the vicissitudes of the Imperial throne. In 251 Decius, elected Emperor by his troops two years earlier, had fallen in battle against the Goths. His successor Valerian, likewise elected by his own troops, defeated the Goths and then came East to meet another threat to the security of the Empire. The Persians, under their ruler Sapor, the second of the Sassanid dynasty, had grown very aggressive, and after annexing Armenia had over-run Mesopotamia, crossed the Euphrates, and penetrated into Cappadocia and Syria, ravaging far and wide.

Rome's preoccupation with the Gothic invaders and the defeat and death of Decius had left the Eastern Empire very much to its fate, and had encouraged the ambitions of Sapor, who, not content like his father Artaxerxes to call himself "Lord of Iran," assumed the title of "King of Kings of Iran and Non-Iran," and proceeded to enforce his claims.

Valerian, who was one of the better Roman Emperors, or at least appeared likely to prove himself so, if his misfortunes had not cut his reign down to two years, faced his task with energy. He arrived in Syria and marched against the Persians, who retreated before him, leaving both Syria and Cappadocia in his hands.

The next step was to recover Mesopotamia, which Valerian could not at once attempt, as an epidemic fell on his army. About the end of 259 he was able to cross the Euphrates, but met with no further success. Encountering Sapor near Emesa, the capital of Osroene, he was defeated and captured, remaining a prisoner for the rest of his life. The legends variously relate how Sapor used him as a footstool to mount his horse and afterwards had him flayed alive (which Mommsen denounces as a Christian invention, Valerian being an enemy to the Christians), and how he employed him as chief engineer in building the great bridge of which there are to-day remains at Shuster, in Western Persia. Firdusi gives the latter story, and the bridge is still called the Emperor's Bridge; but bridge-building is a curious task for a soldier-emperor.

Palmyra may have, as before, rendered some services to the Roman army on its way to the Euphrates; but Odænathus was not anxious to involve his country in the

Roman defeat if he could help it. When Sapor invaded Syria again, capturing and pillaging Antioch, Tarsus, and Cæsarea, he sent envoys to him with letters and gifts. The conqueror, dissatisfied that Odænathus did not come in person to do homage to him, contemptuously returned the gifts.

The Palmyran leader had no mind to be absorbed by Persia; and when the invaders, flushed with success and accompanied by great hosts of captives and much spoil, were returning from Antioch, he attacked them and inflicted heavy losses on them. At least this is the usually accepted story, though some writers deny that Palmyra was at war with Persia till later.

Valerian was succeeded by his indolent and pleasure-loving son Gallienus, who was only too glad to leave the defence of the East to Odænathus. His hold even over the West was very precarious. The barbarians threatened his rule there, there were many aspirants to the Imperial throne, and plague and famine ravaged the people.

One of the most serious rebellions defied the authority of Gallienus in both East and West. Two of Valerian's generals, Macrianus and Callistus, set up the two young sons of the former, Macrianus and Quietus, as joint Emperors, and dividing their forces tried to make good their claim. But Odænathus saw an opportunity for Palmyra here. He attacked and captured one of the pretenders in Syria, while the other, accompanied by Macrianus the elder, went to Illyria, where defeat and death awaited them.

The prudence of Odænathus was manifested. Gallienus was delighted, and invested him with the supreme command

in the East, allowing him also to call himself King of Palmyra. He had no intention of renouncing his shadowy authority over part of his Empire; but circumstances forced him to leave it to another to assert that authority for him.

The new king acted with boldness and skill. He crossed the Euphrates and quickly captured Edessa and other Mesopotamian towns. Nor did he stop here. He penetrated into Persia itself, and advanced as far as its capital, Ctesiphon. In the following year, 265, he made a second invasion, and for a time actually besieged Ctesiphon. His army, which had been strengthened by the addition of some Roman troops from Syria, was clearly a very effective force.

There were public rejoicings in Rome over the success of Odænathus, which relieved the harassed Empire for some time of the Persian menace, and regained Mesopotamia and Armenia from Sapor's rule. But there might well be misgivings among the more clear-sighted Romans over the Palmyran prince's commanding position, with the greater part of Syria in his control, from Armenia in the north to Arabia in the south, and with a strong influence over those two countries. Some appear to have suspected that he wished for an alliance with Persia; though Sapor was hardly a desirable ally for an ambitious man.

Some of the officers of the Roman forces with Odænathus may have been among those who mistrusted his intentions. At any rate, when he was suddenly and treacherously murdered at Emesa, at the end of 266 or the beginning of 267,* it was rumoured that the Romans had instigated the

* The writer on Palmyra in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* holds that Odænathus was not murdered now, but lived to begin the war against Aurelian. I have however, followed the ordinary account, for which there is much to be said.

crime. The actual assassin was the King's own nephew Mæonius (Mannai), whom it was said he had reprimanded for arrogant behaviour.

Odænathus had played the leading part in the drama of Palmyra so far. Now Zenobia took the centre of the stage. Some of the historians of the Empire implicate her in the murder, it being apparently necessary to make all dominant women in the East murderers of their husbands! There does not seem in the present case the slightest reason for this terrible accusation. Zenobia had, while Odænathus was conducting the war against Persia, remained behind in Palmyra as regent. (This seems far more probable than the story that she accompanied him to Ctesiphon.) Are we to suppose that her regency inspired her with the ambition to rule without a husband? She was, of course, ambitious, as her subsequent behaviour showed. But there is no evidence of criminality.

The historians whom Gibbon follows assign to Odænathus and Zenobia three sons, Timolaus, Herennianus, and Vaballathus (Wahballath), also called Athenodorus. Now the eldest son is said to have been slain with his father at Emesa, his name appearing in some accounts as Herodes. What became of Herennianus—which appears to be a version of Hairanes, a common name in the family—is unknown. Vaballathus, who was very young, remained with his mother, and it was he who succeeded Odænathus, Zenobia exercising the powers of regent on his behalf.

First, however, she had to deal with the assassin Mæonius, who attempted to usurp the throne of his uncle. This she successfully did, and no more was heard of him. The next action attributed to her is vouched for by

Trebellius Pollio, who says that Gallienus, when he heard of the death of Odænathus, sent an army to Syria under Heraclian, the prætorian prefect, which Zenobia defeated and drove out. Gibbon and the modern writer, Professor H. Stuart Jones,* accept Pollio's account; but it seems very improbable when we consider that Palmyra remained at peace with Rome under Gallienus, under his successor Claudius, and in the first year of Aurelian's reign, and continued to profess to be acting as representative of the Empire in the East.

Gallienus did not long survive Odænathus, for in the spring of 268 he was murdered by his own troops while besieging in Milan one of the many rebels against his authority in the West. He was succeeded by Claudius II, an Illyrian, who had been a good general under three Emperors and was popular with the Army. Claudius had his time fully occupied in fighting, with considerable success, against the Alemmanic invaders of Italy and the ever troublesome Goths. His short reign of two years, which was terminated by a natural death, allowed him no leisure to attend to Eastern affairs.

Consequently Zenobia was allowed a free hand. When an usurper named Probatus seized Egypt and tried to establish himself as an independent ruler, it was left to Palmyra to recover it on behalf of the Empire. It is said that a prominent Egyptian, Timagenes, invited Zenobia to come there. She sent her commander-in-chief, Zabdas, with an army seventy thousand strong, which easily defeated the Egyptian forces and over-ran the country. Probatus

---

* *The Roman Empire*, in the Story of the Nations series.

recovered Alexandria for a time, but was ultimately defeated and slain.

Adding Egypt to its dominions, the kingdom of Palmyra was now at the height of empire. In Asia Minor its claims extended even as far as Chalcedon, opposite Byzantium. The pretence was still kept up of acting in the name of Rome, but this pretence did not last long.

Zenobia visited Egypt in person, and it may be now that she asserted her kinship with the Cleopatra whom she so much admired. She showed favour to Alexandria, and particularly, it is said, to the Jews who were so numerous there.

On the death of Claudius, another successful soldier, Aurelian, was set up as Emperor. A Pannonian by birth, he had risen from the ranks, and now, though about fifty-eight years of age, had a brilliant military career not only behind him but still to come. He could no more than Gallienus or Claudius give attention to the East at first. He had a hard struggle to get through with the various Germanic invaders who were for ever breaking across the Roman frontiers. He coped with these victoriously, and then turned to consider the East.

It appears that at the beginning of his reign Aurelian came to some sort of arrangement with Palmyra, so as to allow him to conduct his Western campaigns. He is said to have addressed a letter to Zenobia, giving her the chief credit for her husband's successes—which seems rather excessive praise. He did not remonstrate when coins were struck at Alexandria and at Antioch with his own head on one side and on the other that of Julius Aurelius Septimius Vaballathus, "King, Consul, Imperator,

Commander of the Romans." Zenobia's head did not yet appear on coins, but she seems to have been allowed, or at least she took, the honorary title of Augusta, or Sebaste, the privilege hitherto of Imperial ladies only.

Vaballathus may have been a mere puppet in his mother's hands, for we hear of no independent action on his part. The coins no doubt were struck on her suggestion, as also those which were issued later, about the beginning of A.D. 271. On these Aurelian's head no longer appeared, while Vaballathus was styled Augustus—a far more serious assumption of the Imperial dignity than the use of the feminine counterpart of the word by Zenobia. It was a direct challenge to Aurelian, who could not overlook it. Did Zenobia underrate him? Her experience of Roman Emperors might have encouraged her to do so. Valerian had failed in the East, Gallienus and Claudius had left it alone. But Aurelian, had she known it, was a much greater man. It is said that Longinus, in whose counsels Zenobia put much faith, advised her to take up a strong attitude towards the Romans. If so, it was an exhibition of extreme unwisdom on the part of one in other respects so wise.

War was imminent, and it began in the autumn of 271.* Aurelian did not at once come to Syria, but his lieutenant Marcus Aurelius Probus, another Pannonian, who succeeded

---

* It is now that the writer in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* puts the murder of Odænathus at Emesa. He adduces the evidence of inscriptions of the period showing the erection in the Grand Colonnade of Palmyra of two statues of Odænathus and Zenobia by their generals Zabdai and Zabbai (Zabdas and Zabbaios), Odænathus being called "King and Restorer of the State." But, supposing the date to be certain, might not the erection of the statue have been a posthumous honour?

him as Emperor five years later, invaded Egypt, drove out the Palmyran troops, and almost destroyed Alexandria.

In spite of the loss of Egypt, Zenobia and Vaballathus were still in a strong position, with their control of Syria, much of Asia Minor and Mesopotamia, and the friendship of Armenia and Arabia, which supplied mercenaries to their army. The Palmyran troops had shown their prowess as lately as in the war against Sapor, and they still had a stiffening of Romans, lent to Palmyra for that war and owing no allegiance to Aurelian. Overtures were apparently made to Persia, too, to lend aid, as it was hoped that Sapor would be glad to fight against what was now the common enemy of Persia and Palmyra.

There was, however, a weak point in Palmyra's position, which soon became evident when Aurelian himself reached the East. About the end of 271 he crossed over to Asia Minor with his seasoned troops who had defeated the German barbarians, and began operations by invading Cappadocia, and capturing Tyana, of which he treated the inhabitants with mercy, as he did also those of Ancyra. Then, crossing the Taurus range, he entered Syria.

So far the opposition had been slight. And now the weak point of Palmyra's defence revealed itself. Its hold upon Syria was precarious. The inhabitants, particularly those of Palestine, did not like the rule of Palmyra. There might be Syrian blood there, but it was essentially an Arab state, and between Syrians and Arabs the relations were marked by hatred on one side, contempt on the other. Zenobia, therefore, could not rely on Syria, which looked on the Romans as deliverers.

Aurelian marched on Antioch, and at the river Orontes

encountered the vanguard of the Palmyran army, some of its celebrated mailed cavalry. It was not strong enough to delay him, and he appeared before Antioch. Here were Zenobia and her general Zabdas, with their main forces. They did not stay to dispute the Roman advance. Zenobia knew that she was unpopular in Antioch, especially with the strong Christian element. She had shown herself friendly to the late bishop, Paul of Samosata, who was deposed as a heretic in 269, and the orthodox had resented it.

Antioch surrendered to Aurelian, who spared the city and its inhabitants. He was naturally inclined to clemency, and he rightly considered that they had acted under duress in taking up arms against him.

Only at Daphne, five miles south of Antioch, did Zenobia make a stand; and here the fight was merely a rearguard action to enable the main army to fall back on Emesa. Perhaps Zabdas advised that it would be more advantageous to have the decisive battle at a nearer point to their base, Emesa being only seventy miles from Palmyra, and farther from Aurelian's base.

The battle of Emesa was long and obstinate. The Palmyran cavalry were early victorious, but were too impetuous in their charge, and as they returned to rejoin the infantry were cut to pieces. Aurelian's veterans carried the day, and Zenobia's losses were very heavy, above all among her Roman troops. She retired, defeated, to Palmyra; but she is said to have written a letter to Aurelian, in which she asserted: "I have suffered no great loss, for almost all who have fallen were Romans."

Retreating across the desert to Palmyra was easier for Zenobia than advancing was for Aurelian, for her cavalry,

with their Parthian-like tactics, harassed his troops incessantly. He arrived at his goal in time, however, and began to lay siege to the city. Now he had a difficulty in provisioning his men, and Palmyra put up a stout defence, in the course of which he was wounded. But he had a weapon which proved as powerful as steel, and that was gold, with which he was able to corrupt Palmyra's Arab and Armenian mercenaries. The anticipated aid from Persia did not arrive in time to relieve the pressure. Sapor was old, and indeed near his death; and when a Persian force did approach Palmyra it was easily beaten and driven off by the Romans.

At last Zenobia abandoned hope and decided to make a dash for freedom. She had perhaps been offered an asylum in Persia. Accompanied by Vaballathus and a few attendants, she slipped out of Palmyra, and mounted on swift dromedaries they covered the sixty miles from the city to the Euphrates. On the river bank they were overtaken by pursuers and made prisoners.

Palmyra itself surrendered. Aurelian again spared the city, though he took all the wealth of the merchants. The question what to do with the principal captives was debated. The Roman army wished Zenobia to be put to death, but Aurelian preferred to keep her and her son for the triumphal procession which must later be his in Rome. Towards her advisers he did not show such mercy. He had Longinus and some others executed. The Imperial historians make Zenobia herself throw all the blame for her conduct on Longinus. They are, of course, chiefly concerned to make out a black case against her character, so that too much attention must not be paid to their charges.

Zenobia was sent to Rome to await the day when she should be required for Aurelian's triumph. A story told by some of the writers that she died on the way there, through grief at her change of fortune, is obviously untrue. The Emperor himself left for the Hellespont on his way home, when suddenly the news reached him that Palmyra had revolted and had massacred his garrison. He marched back, captured the city for the second time, and this time showed no mercy. He could, indeed, hardly afford not to make an example. The defenders were put to the sword, and the city was wrecked. The Temple of the Sun was spared, but its treasures were transferred to Rome to adorn the temple Aurelian built there to the Sun as identified with Jupiter. He gave orders for the erection at the end of the Grand Colonnade, and near the Temple, of the threefold Triumphal Arch, of which the greater part remains to-day to commemorate his victory over Palmyra.

In 273 Zenobia was the leading figure among the captives in Aurelian's triumph through the streets of Rome. Decked in jewels, and in chains of gold, she suffered the shame which Cleopatra swore to avoid, and successfully avoided by means of the asp. She was not otherwise ill-treated, being allowed to end her days in a villa at the old Latin town of Tibur, the modern Tivoli. With her lived her sons, according to some accounts, though we can only account for one, Vaballathus, as still living. We are told also of daughters, who married into noble families, so that she had descendants living as late as the fifth century A.D. These daughters might be accepted if we can believe the story of the Byzantine

historian Zonaras that she married in Rome "one of the most distinguished men"; or they may have been by Odænathus.

It would indeed be welcome could we say that Zenobia employed her leisure at Tibur in writing a history of her times. The pupil of Longinus must have been capable of the task. But there is no trace or report of such a work. We know nothing of her last years except what has been mentioned above, and no date is recorded of her death. The annalists of Imperial Rome were not generous towards the conquered foes of their masters, and they treated Zenobia no better than any other. She emerges from their writings a great figure because of her real greatness, not because they took any pains to represent her as great. If we account her an Arab, which we probably should, then she is the outstanding woman in Arab history, and worthy to be put alongside the dominant women of the other races of humanity. Brave, self-reliant, an inspiring leader, cultured, beautiful ("for in speaking of a lady," to quote Gibbon again, "these trifles become of importance"), she justified her claim to a place as one of the world's heroines.

The city whose name Zenobia helped to make so famous was all but ruined by the punishment inflicted by Aurelian after his second capture of it. It recovered to a certain extent, and even received some marks of renewed Imperial favour when Diocletian came East to superintend the war against the Persians. With the establishment of Christianity as the state religion of the Empire, Palmyra became the seat of a bishopric; and Justinian took some interest in the place, to which he restored its fortifications.

Even as late as the fourteenth century Palmyra continued to be a city of some note. Its final destruction was brought about, as the next century opened, by that devastating monster, Timur (Tamerlane), when near the end of his maniac career. After its sack by the Tartars Palmyra never recovered. It shrank into what it has become to-day: a magnificent ruin and, in the area of the Temple of the Sun, a collection of clay-built huts, in which live the humble Arab inhabitants of what is once more Tadmor in the Wilderness.

CHAPTER IV

THEODORA OF BYZANTIUM

SMALL—it is remarkable how many of the dominant women in history have been small—dark-haired, with a pale face, of oval shape, and big black eyes, the celebrated Empress Theodora of Christian Constantinople has come down to posterity with a name sadly tarnished by the writers, from her own times to those of Victorien Sardou, author of the five-act melodrama which he called after her.

Not that her early critics dared to publish their scurrilous attacks during her life, or while her adoring husband Justinian, Emperor and legislator, still ruled and mourned her loss. They were discreetly silent until, in A.D. 565, Justinian passed away. Then they allowed their pens full license; and the result was a portrait horrifying in every detail. The character of the Imperial courtesan has had its appeal to the imagination of later days. So the legend persists.

Is it a mere legend? This is what Theodora's enemies say of her. About the beginning of the Sixth Century of the Christian era there was born to the wife of a certain Acacius, humble attendant on the bears kept for the entertainment of spectators at one of the two great circuses in Constantinople, the second of two daughters. The father died soon after, and the mother married again, or

Theodora, Empress of Byzantium.

From a mosaic at Ravenna.

at any rate went to live with another man in a similar position to her late husband's, but at the rival circus. The family circumstances were extremely poor, and to help to improve matters the elder of the two girls, Comito,* went on the stage, if we may so call it. She was, in fact, dancer, acrobat, and pantomimist at the circus; and eventually the little Theodora (though that was not yet her name) accompanied her as attendant, learnt the business, and soon took up the profession herself.

At the circus Theodora became a child "star." Now this, unfortunately, meant more than ability at dancing, acrobatics, and pantomime. To succeed it was necessary for ambitious girls to cast all restraint aside, and to combine another profession with their legitimate one. Theodora, the legend goes on, did not hesitate. She had no modesty nor moral scruples, and was quite prepared to wear no clothes. She attained pre-eminence among her companions by her vicious life. One day she had the luck to attract the attention of Hecebolus, Governor of Roman Africa, who was on leave from his province. He became temporarily infatuated with her, and when he returned to his duties, took her back with him. Tiring of her after a time, he turned her out into the streets. For some years she wandered about the cities of Egypt and Syria, making a precarious and disgraceful living. Finally, in A.D. 521, perhaps now twenty-one years old, she returned to Constantinople; and there a surprising thing happened.

The Emperor on the throne was the old Justin I, a *parvenu* from Illyria, now part of the kingdom of Yugo-

* Comito lived to marry a high military officer, Sittas; but this fortune may, of course, have come to her through Theodora's influence.

Slavia. He had, as a youth, walked to Constantinople to join the army, and had had no education. But when he rose in his profession to become commander of the Prætorian Guards, and at the age of sixty-six had the good fortune to be chosen Emperor, he did not forget his family, but determined that his nephews at least should have the advantage of education. One, his sister's son, Flavus Petrus Sabbatius, he brought from his native village of Scupi (now Uskub), gave him the best training he could, and made him favourite and heir, bestowing on him the name of Justinian. At the time of Theodora's return to Constantinople he was about twenty-eight. Somehow they met (for this is not explained), and Justinian fell deeply in love. Plainly destined for the throne as he was by his uncle, he was ready to make this disreputable young vagabond, to whom the modern phrase " described as an actress " so aptly applies, his wife. But there were two obstacles. The Byzantine nobility were forbidden to marry actresses or anyone of like class. Justinian, no doubt, felt that he might get round his affectionate uncle, who was always heaping honours on him, and this year made him Consul. Justin, however, had a wife, formerly his slave and concubine, but now the Empress Eugenia; and she, as might be expected, had no sympathy with misalliances. It was not, therefore, till her death, two years later, that her nephew carried out his intention. Justin offered no objection. He had, indeed, already obliged Justinian by elevating Theodora to patrician rank.

A few years later, and Justin was dying. The Senate, in alarm about the succession, begged him to take a colleague while he still lived. Nothing loth, the Emperor

had Justinian and Theodora proclaimed Augustus and Augusta, and solemnly crowned by the Patriarch of Constantinople at the splendid church of Hagia Sophia on Easter Sunday, 527. From the church husband and wife were escorted to the Hippodrome, which was used for public assemblies as well as for games, and there received the applause of the populace, who accompanied them in triumphal procession to their home.

On the following August 1st Justin died, and Justinian and Theodora were seated on their thrones, Emperor and Empress of the civilised world. This, it must be admitted, was no mean advancement for the poor bearkeeper's daughter, the notorious circus-girl, and all else that we are asked by her enemies to believe that Theodora had been.

To sum up briefly what the same enemies allege against her, Theodora for the remaining twenty-one years of her life maintained an extraordinary and baneful sway over her husband. He disregarded all precedents to allow her to exercise power, and, even where he could not see eye to eye with her, suffered her to thwart his wishes, secretly if not openly. She, for her part, grossly misused her position, amassed a vast fortune by crooked means, never hesitated at murder or cruel torture, in dungeons under the palace, of those who opposed her, and generally merited the execration of mankind. As to whether she continued her licentious life after her marriage, there is a divergence of statement. Her bitterest critic, Procopius, does not say so. But others do.

Such is one side of the case. On the other side are the testimonies of her husband and of her devoted partisans.

Justinian never ceased to extol her virtues. In official documents, such as laws, he would speak of her as "Our most pious consort, given us by God," and "partner in Our counsels," and the oath of allegiance had to be taken to "our divine and pious rulers, Justinian and Theodora, the consort of his throne." It was no exaggeration to say that he allowed her to have enormous influence over him; but he justified himself by the wisdom which he ascribed to her. He named six cities in his empire after her. On her death he was inconsolable, and the readiest way to his favour was always praise of her whom he had lost. A poet won his heart by his description of "the excellent, beautiful, wise Empress."

Then to her partisans Theodora was little less than a saint; for many years after she had gone, indeed, she was actually esteemed a saint. "The Empress who loves God, the faithful Empress," was a frequent description of her. And the eulogists could point to her magnificent charities, her foundation of churches, convents, hospitals and almshouses in various parts of the Empire. They would have none of the story of her girlhood at the circus and elsewhere, but found for her a pious old father—of senatorial rank, said some—who made it a strict condition, before he would allow her to marry Justinian, that she must be allowed to continue in the particular branch of the Christian faith which he had taught her, and not be forced to accept doctrines by others considered orthodox.

What is the explanation of this astonishing difference of opinion on Theodora's character? It is, as in the cases of Anne Boleyn and of Queen Elizabeth in English history, and other famous women, too, the influence of religious

views. Theodora was, like Anne Boleyn and her daughter, a heretic in the eyes of the orthodox. Her particular heresy was that known as "Monophysite," which admitted only one nature, a celestial essence, in Christ. This, the doctrine of Eutyches, had been expressly condemned by the Council of Chalcedon, summoned by Marcian, husband of Pulcheria,* in A.D. 451. The Church, that is the Pope at Rome, continued the ban on the Monophysites; and Justinian was strictly orthodox at the beginning of his reign, though accused of another heresy in his old age, so that short shrift was given to upholders of dissenting views where the Church could have its way. But Monophysitism still flourished in Egypt and Syria, and had a strong following even in Constantinople itself. Theodora was an ardent sectarian throughout her reign, and was therefore to her friends a saintly woman, to her foes an accursed one, against whom it was fair to use any and all weapons—when it was safe.

The chief of these foes was Procopius, a man of about her own age, though he long survived her and kept his attack upon her secret until his own death and Justinian's, which occurred about the same time. Coming young from his native Palestine to Constantinople, Procopius set up as an advocate. Then he became private secretary to Justinian's great general Belisarius, who took him with him on his campaigns on various frontiers of the Empire. Returning at last to Constantinople, he was, first on Belisarius's recommendation, and then through his own talents, treated with great honour by Justinian. In return, he wrote in the most fulsome strain about the Emperor,

* See p. 31.

particularly as the erector of great public buildings—one of Justinian's dearest hobbies—and compiled some excellent historical works. There was apparently no suspicion of any animus in Procopius against his sovereigns. But after his death there was discovered the work we know as the *Anecdota* or *Secret History*, in which he vilified his contemporaries with the utmost freedom. He was unsparing to his patrons, Justinian and Belisarius, but devoted his choicest abuse to Theodora. His eminence as a historian has blinded the eyes of posterity to the atrocious ingratitude of Procopius; and his picture of Theodora has been accepted as true.

Procopius, of course, is only one, if the principal, of Theodora's slanderers. Justinian dead, there were many others who joined in the abuse of her. Orthodoxy had its revenge on the heretic woman.

Certainly it must be granted that as Empress she was a sore thorn in the orthodox side. Justinian, as has been said, was orthodox; but his infatuation for Theodora and his generally wavering character, which looked to others to make decisions for him, allowed her to check his zeal for the persecution of the Monophysites. She went further, and actually interfered in the appointment of bishops. Notably, she procured the nomination of Anthimus as Patriarch of Constantinople, in defiance of the Pope. When orthodoxy prevailed and Anthimus was removed, she hid him in her palace, where he lived in peace until her death. Similarly she had Severus appointed at Antioch, and first Timotheus and then Theodosius at Alexandria. Theodosius, like Anthimus, she sheltered in her palace after his deposition.

But the crowning exploit in her crusade on behalf of her fellow-sectarians was in A.D. 537. The Pope of the day was Silverius, to whom she addressed an appeal to condemn the Council of Chalcedon. This condemnation would have lifted the ban on the Monophysites, and Silverius not unnaturally refused. Theodora never recognised defeat. Her most intimate woman friend was Antonina, wife of Belisarius, who was at the moment engaged in conquering Italy from the Goths. Belisarius was much under the domination of his wife, who is described, like Theodora, and perhaps with equal truth or untruth, as of circus origin, and of notoriously immoral character. He listened to the prompting of the two women and, without consulting Justinian, deposed the Pope.

Theodora, however, was disappointed in her expectations. The new Pope, Vigilius, who she had been led to hope would do what Silverius had refused, turned out in the end no more amenable than his predecessor; and she had to content herself with protecting her religious friends as best she could to the end of her life.

Moral courage was certainly one of Theodora's most marked characteristics. She showed it pre-eminently in an affair which occurred in the fourth year of Justinian's reign, and but for her bravery might have brought that reign to an abrupt close.

Constantinople was, at the beginning of the year 532, as it had long been, an exceedingly factious city. There were, above all, two great organisations, known as the Blues and the Greens, which had their origin in the early days of the Roman Empire, or perhaps the last days of the

Republic.* They had begun as "fans" at the chariot races, but had developed into political factions, while still keeping up their interest in racing. There were really four cliques, from the four chariots which competed in each race; but the Reds and the Whites had, as far as political activities were concerned, become merged in the Blues and the Greens.

In Constantinople the two organisations were wealthy and powerful, and had even a quasi-military side such as can be paralleled in modern Europe. Almost everybody belonged to one faction or the other, including some of the Emperors. Justinian, before he ascended the throne, had been a Blue.† It was at the Blues' circus (where, as at the Greens', games of less importance than the great public games at the Hippodrome were held) that Theodora's enemies allege she mis-spent her youth.

Justinian, as Emperor, decided to put down the turbulence of the two factions, which led to constant troubles. He ordered impartial punishment for offenders of either side.

In January, 532, a test case arose. There was a fatal riot, and the Prefect of Constantinople arrested the ring-leaders. After an inquiry, seven were condemned to death, and five were actually hanged. In the other two cases the rope broke, and the men were rescued from the Prefect's hands by some monks and carried to the sanctuary of a church. One was a Blue, the other a Green.

* Professor J. B. Bury, *History of the Later Roman Empire*, has much interesting information about these factions.

† Justinian was not as wise as Marcus Aurelius, who in his *Meditations* takes credit that he learnt from his tutor "to be neither of the Green nor of the Blue party in the Circus games."

At the Hippodrome races three days later the Emperor was assailed with loud cries for the pardon of the two men, Blues and Greens for once combining forces. He made no answer, and the race programme was carried out amid scenes of much disorder. At its finish the leaders of the two factions met and agreed on further action, taking as watchword *Nika* (Victory)—whence the rising is known as "the Nika Revolt."

The same evening a Blue and Green mob made their way to the great gaol, killed some of the officials, loosed the prisoners, and set the building on fire. The rioting spread, and other buildings were burnt. Justinian's order for a second day's racing failed to appease the mob, who next day burnt part of the Hippodrome itself. There was a demand for the dismissal of the Prefect and other unpopular officials, and Justinian, in a panic, gave way. This did not satisfy. There was now a plot on foot to depose the Emperor and set up in his place one of the nephews of a predecessor, Anastasius.

Justinian did not trust the loyalty of the Palace Guards, and had only about 1,500 provincial troops in Constantinople on whom he knew he could rely, as they were attached to Belisarius and another of his generals. These were too few to hold the rioters in check, and the city was given up to street-fighting and incendiarism. At last, on Sunday, January 18th, the sixth day of the revolt, Justinian determined to make a personal appeal. He left the Palace and went to the Hippodrome, Bible in hand, and ready to swear to give the mob all they wanted. He was received with shouts of "Liar!" "Perjurer!" and "Long live Hypatius!"—Hypatius being a nephew of

Anastasius, whom they now persuaded, much against his will, to accept the throne.

A hurried council was held at the palace. All, including his generals, and even Belisarius, agreed with Justinian that only flight was left—until Theodora spoke. The brave woman would not hear of flight, though it might mean safety. Every man born into the world must die, she said; but to one who had reigned exile was intolerable. She was not prepared to see the day when she should no longer be addressed as Empress. Was the Emperor sure that one day he would not prefer death to safety? She ended with a quotation from Isocrates: "The purple of Empire is a fair winding-sheet."

Her courage carried the day. Justinian did not fly. Instead, after secret emissaries had been sent out with large sums of money to corrupt and sow dissension among the rioters, Belisarius led his troops, Goths and Herulians, to the Hippodrome and surprised the mob. There was a massacre, in which it is said that 30,000 people were slain. Hypatius and a brother of his were executed, and the revolt was at an end. After this, it is not surprising to hear, the Blues and Greens were much less troublesome. But it is to the courage of Theodora, in the first place, that the saving of the throne was due.

In another notable instance Theodora rescued her husband from a less instant, but more insidious danger. Her conduct here was far from heroic; but it had a laudable object, to rid him of a minister whom his subjects hated as much as Justinian himself trusted. This was John, called, from his origin, of Cappadocia. Advanced by Justinian to be Prætorian Prefect of the East, John plundered the

provinces shamefully for the benefit of the Imperial exchequer and his own purse. Justinian was pleased with the revenues thus coming in to him, but was obliged by popular clamour to dismiss John at the time of the Nika Revolt. He soon restored him, however, and the provincials for years more suffered harsh oppression.

The Empress hated John equally with her subjects. But John was an able man as well as a scoundrel, and his hold over Justinian seemed unshakable. He knew what Theodora thought of him and was well on his guard against assassination, never going about except with a strong escort.

Still, as we have said, Theodora never recognised defeat. If violence could not prevail, there was intrigue. She took counsel with her friend Antonina, and this is what they contrived between them. John had a daughter Euphemia, to whom he was devoted. Antonina came to Euphemia and hinted to her that Belisarius was disaffected towards the Emperor. Why should not Euphemia's father (who had been encouraged by a soothsayer to believe that one day he would occupy the throne) work in harmony with Belisarius to depose Justinian?

A midnight meeting was arranged between John and Antonina, at a villa which Belisarius owned near Chalcedon. Theodora sent two of her trusted servants to overhear the conversation and report. Something went amiss, however, at the end and, whether or not there was an attempt to arrest the Prefect, a fight took place, from which he escaped to safety. But Theodora had got her evidence, and succeeded in persuading Justinian of his favourite's treachery. John was exiled to Cyzicus and—a curious

vengeance—forced to take deacon's orders. His plunder was confiscated, though Justinian afterwards allowed him to keep some of it.

This was not the finish of John of Cappadocia. At Cyzicus he was accused of instigating the Bishop's murder, and he was sent to prison in Egypt. When Theodora died he was released and allowed to return to Constantinople, a free man but a priest, which doubtless did not prevent him from enjoying the remains of his fortune.

Theodora's name is connected with one particularly notorious crime, for which the excuse would be infinitely less than that for the removal of John of Cappadocia, could it be brought home to her. But it is only Procopius who is her accuser. Rome, subsequently to its capture by Alaric, had had a chequered history, until it fell into the hands of Theodoric the Ostrogoth, who justified his title of the Great by his generally firm and prudent government. He died in A.D. 526, leaving behind a daughter, Amalasuntha, whom he nominated as regent during the minority of her young son. Amalasuntha's authority, however, was threatened by two dangers. The fondest hope of Justinian was the restoration of the old Roman Empire, with himself as ruler in Constantinople; and Theodora strongly encouraged him in this ambition. Further, Theodoric's nephew, Theodabad, who succeeded him as King of the Ostrogoths, coveted the possession of Rome and secretly intrigued against his cousin.

Amalasuntha had been well educated at Ravenna during her youth, and was a woman of considerable force of character, who inherited from her father the idea of building up an united Italian-Gothic nation. She stamped out a

conspiracy against herself by the assassination of its leaders. But on the early death of her son, before he came of age, she unwisely offered to Theodabad to recognise him as king, provided that she continued to govern at Rome. He agreed, and then treacherously seized and imprisoned her. She attempted to escape to Constantinople, to seek the protection of Justinian, whereon she was murdered in A.D. 534. Procopius alleges that Theodora instigated Theodabad to this murder, for fear that Amalasuntha should exert too much influence over Justinian if she came to Constantinople. There is no evidence for this amiable theory.

Theodabad did not enjoy the results of his treachery. First Belisarius and then his successor, the great eunuch general Narses, attacked and overthrew the Ostrogoths, and Justinian had the satisfaction of reuniting Italy to the Empire.

If she was guiltless of a hand in Amalasuntha's murder, and if she failed to bring on John of Cappadocia the fate which she desired for him, it is to be feared that Theodora did not shrink from assassination when it seemed to her necessary for the success of her plans. She was certainly vindictive. But that is a common trait in women of her character. On the other hand, she was very loyal to those whom she liked; again no uncommon trait in such women.

She is alleged, by Procopius principally, to have been of a very luxurious and self-indulgent disposition, in great contrast to Justinian, whose habits were very simple; to have been devoted to the pleasures of the table; and to have spent many months of the year at the seaside, attended

always by a vast retinue. Pomp and display were beloved by her, and she was insistent on the most minute forms of etiquette, demanding Oriental prostrations from the courtiers, before her as well as Justinian, and the title of *Despoina* to match his of *Despotes*—Lady and Lord, in place of usual Empress and Emperor.

This may have been true. It is probable that she was of Asiatic, perhaps Paphlagonian origin, so that elaborate reverence might seem to her the proper due of a sovereign. All this is not incompatible with the extreme piety which marked her in an age in which piety was fashionable, though one man's piety might be another's sin.

We have said that she founded in abundance churches, convents and charitable institutions; and she encouraged Justinian to similar activity all over the Empire. She also built one institution which has a curiously modern sound, the Metanoia, a home for fallen women, across the Bosphorus from Constantinople. Her detractors no doubt whispered that there was good reason for her sympathy with these women. A fellow feeling, they might suggest. And they could point to the presence in Constantinople of a daughter, recognised by her, of whom Justinian was certainly not the father; nor was any father known. Procopius also assigned to her a son, John, of unknown paternity, whom he makes to be brought up in Arabia and, returning to Constantinople to appeal to his mother, to be promptly put out of the way. Of this alleged John we hear nothing that is not due to Procopius. But the daughter had a son, who married a daughter of Belisarius.

Her acceptance of one child, born before she became Justinian's bride (for Procopius does not impute a post-

nuptial indiscretion), might be taken as showing that Theodora felt no reason to be ashamed in the matter. Practically all else we know of her own admissions about her life before Justinian came into it is that she built a church to Saint Panteleemon on the site of her childhood's home, in a humble quarter of Constantinople.

Theodora died in June, 548, when she succumbed to cancer, not yet fifty years old, and having been Empress for twenty-one years. Profoundly grieved as he was at her loss, Justinian survived her by seventeen years, but never married again. It cannot be disputed that she had made him an admirable wife. Whatever the truth about her early days, she was the Empress that he wanted. Part of the credit for his reign, which was on the whole a good one for his Empire, cannot be denied to her who so dominated his timid and wavering soul. When it came to a crisis, she played the man better than he. It has been well said that had she really been the saint which some of her adherents made her out to be, she would have been far less suited to Justinian. It was asked of her to supply the virility which he lacked; and she supplied it. Her vices did him less harm than her virtues did him good.

"Superior in intelligence to all the world" is what one of her contemporaries, John of Lydia, declared her. This is a strong claim, and perhaps a biased one. But even the virulence of her enemies did not deny her great intelligence. They would have weakened their case against her had they done so. Less intelligent, she would have offended them less. So they concentrated their attack upon her morals, with the result which we see. They leave us the super-woman; and such, on any view, Theodora must remain.

CHAPTER V

ENGLAND'S ROYAL ENIGMA

THE author has no intention of adding yet another to the already immense list of biographies of Queen Elizabeth. But to write of the dominant women in history and not to devote at least some little space to her would be to leave the matter absurdly incomplete. So perhaps no further apology is necessary for the pages which follow.

. . . . .

Immensely popular with her subjects, except for a small section who, through their sufferings for religion, had reason enough not to love her; courted from early days by all the Powers of Europe, Elizabeth must be admitted to have been a strange specimen of womanhood. "Good Queen Bess" is hardly the appropriate description of her. A great sovereign she undoubtedly was; but not good, in the ordinary sense of the word.

She was as unscrupulous as the Tudor family knew best how to be in a most unscrupulous age. She was imperious, violent-tempered, and ill-tongued. She was often vindictive. Men trembled at her frown, it is said, as much as at her father's. She was exceedingly vain, both of her intellect and of her looks. She thirsted for the admiration of men to the end of her long life. She was

Queen Elizabeth.

From a painting, possibly by Gerards, in the National Portrait Gallery.

unsympathetic in her attitude towards other women, among whom she made no friends when once she had passed girlhood. Her treatment of Mary Stuart was brutal, even though we admit that the problem of what to do with the Queen of Scots, who had also claimed England, was very difficult.

But, as a ruler, Elizabeth combined a genuine patriotism with intense pride in her position. She had, when her intense susceptibility to handsome appearances did not blind her, a *flair* for choosing the right men as instruments of government. William Cecil was the most notable example; but there were also (to mention only a few) Francis Walsingham, Christopher Hatton, Nicholas Bacon, Robert Cecil, and even her cousin, Henry Carey, whom she created Lord Hunsdon without incurring the reproach of unduly favouring a relative.*

For the explanation of Elizabeth's curious mixture of character we must look to her breeding, her upbringing, and a third element, which we may leave on one side for the present.

She was the daughter of Henry VIII,† whom assuredly no one in modern times would choose for a father, and of Anne Boleyn, the beautiful, the vain, the subtle, and the

* "She wisely declined the least mention of affinity: such a condescension must seemingly have debased her in her throne," writes the Earl of Cork, in his preface to the *Memoirs of the Life of Robert Carey* (1757).

† Writing in *The Evening Standard* some time ago, Dean Inge said: "Doubts have even been thrown on the paternity of Queen Elizabeth, whose features, unlike those of her sister Mary, show no trace of Henry VIII." Personally I can see no more of Henry in Mary's looks than in Elizabeth's. Mary resembled her mother, as Elizabeth resembled hers. But who can deny that Elizabeth had many resemblances to Henry other than physical?

She is said to have, as far as possible, avoided references to either father or mother, which in the circumstances of their story is not strange.

brave-hearted. Such a combination could scarcely fail to produce something beyond the normal.

As for her upbringing, she lost her mother by death upon the scaffold before she was three years old. She was branded as a bastard, and, though not actually ill-treated, was bundled about from place to place, visited occasionally by her father, who retained some odd sort of love for her, and allowed to spend part of her time with her little half-brother Edward, Prince of Wales.

In this half-brother's brief reign Elizabeth was better off; but in 1549, when only in her sixteenth year, she nearly met with disaster through the base designs upon her of a man twenty-five years her senior, who should have been among the first to protect the girl, practically a ward in his wife's house. This man was Thomas Seymour, uncle of the young king, brother of the great Lord Protector Somerset, and husband of the late King's widow, Catherine Parr, as she is commonly called. Catherine had been a kind stepmother to Elizabeth, and kept her with her after Henry's death; but she was lax in her supervision of her new husband's conduct towards the girl, which was, to say the least, unduly familiar.

The story has too often been told to need repetition. Seymour in the end estranged Catherine, and Elizabeth, so that the latter left her stepmother's house. The matter did not finish here. When Catherine died, after childbirth, Seymour aspired to make Elizabeth his wife. His general ambition, however, had antagonised the Lord Protector, and led to his execution on Tower Hill. Attempts were made to implicate Elizabeth in Seymour's schemes. She bore herself boldly under the questionings which she had

to undergo, and was allowed to go into temporary retirement in the country, devoting herself to study.

What were Elizabeth's feelings towards Seymour it is impossible to guess. He was twenty-five years her senior, as has been said, but was a fine figure of a man. He was "fierce in courage, in personage stately, in voice magnificent, but somewhat empty in matter," says Sir John Hayward, a writer acquainted with people who had known Seymour. Elizabeth's alleged comment, when she heard of his execution in March, 1549, was: "This day died a man with much wit and very little judgment"—from which it looks as if she was not much afflicted by his death.

Somerset followed his brother to the scaffold less than three years later, and in another seventeen months Edward VI was dead. Then came Mary Tudor's reign, and Elizabeth's position grew most precarious, owing to the difference of the religious views of the two half-sisters. The hopes of the Reformers were centred in the younger princess; and it could hardly be expected that there should be love lost between the daughters of Katharine of Aragon and Anne Boleyn.

But in November, 1558, Mary died, and at the age of twenty-five Elizabeth found herself Queen of England. Those twenty-five years had been years of repression, and a school of dissimulation; or, we may say, of diplomacy of the Tudor type. Elizabeth made full use of this training throughout the rest of her long life, particularly in a matter which had become of curiously high political importance, namely, how she should dispose of her hand in marriage.

That hand, as a matter of fact, had been an asset in

English foreign politics almost from the start of her life. In her cradle she had been suggested as future wife for a son of Henry's royal friend, Francis I of France. A later suggestion was marriage with young James Hamilton, next heir to the Scottish throne after the infant Mary Stuart. Under Edward VI there were schemes for a less ambitious union, with an Italian or a Saxon prince; and there was the entanglement with Thomas Seymour, which left Elizabeth gravely compromised. Still, under Mary, there were numerous English aspirants in the field, and then, as it became obvious that she would succeed to the throne, more foreign princes. Philip of Spain offered his cousin, the young Duke of Savoy, while Gustavus of Sweden proposed his son Eric. But Mary refused to consider her husband's suggestion, as it involved a declaration of Elizabeth's legitimacy; and how could both she and Elizabeth be legitimate? As for the Swede, the ambassador who came over to urge the proposal made the error of going first to Elizabeth instead of to the now dying Queen.

At last, near the end of 1558, Elizabeth was her own mistress, and the matrimonial game grew fast and furious. But Elizabeth kept her head.

She could have had Philip of Spain himself, who had been kind to her in Mary's reign and to whom she always retained a certain amount of gratitude. She would not consider him, however, as a husband. Nor when he suggested alternatively his cousin, the Archduke Ferdinand, would she do more than pretend to listen. This attitude towards princes she maintained throughout. Austrian, German, Danish, Swedish, Spanish and French scions of royalty, even a Russian (Ivan the Terrible!) came before her,

either in person or by proxy, and she toyed with the idea.

Only one Frenchman, the ugly, little, pock-marked François de Valois, Duke of Alençon, over twenty-one years her junior, seemed really likely to succeed in his suit. He was pressed upon her by his mother Catherine de Medici from 1572 to his death in 1584. In 1579, when he was not yet twenty-four, he came to see her, and appeared to make an excellent impression. She nicknamed him, in her playful way, her "frog," talked with him all day and part of the night, and led him on to write to her the most extraordinary love-letters.

A draft agreement was even drawn up after the Duke had left England. But Elizabeth was well aware that the marriage would be unpopular in England, and she blew hot and cold, to the bewilderment of the French negotiators. Alençon came again in 1581, without the permission of his brother, Henri III; and yet again, later in the same year, when he pressed the claims of "your prince frog" with great ardour. She kissed him in public, and promised he should be her husband. But her terms were too high for France, and her caprice at last infuriated the Duke. She had given him a ring, which he took as a marriage pledge. One day she told him that she was thinking about the ring, and felt that if she consented she would not have long to live. He tore off the ring, and swore to leave England at once.

Elizabeth did not want this. She was very anxious for a political alliance with France against Spain. So she appeased his anger, and, when he declared now that he would not leave without her, persuaded him to depart with a promise that if he returned in six weeks she would really marry him—on conditions.

Alençon went off to fight the Spaniards in the Netherlands, where he received a letter from her renewing her conditional promise. In his turn he wrote to her for money to conduct the war against Spain, and she replied, asking if this was the way to keep one's friends, to be always draining them!

The affair was a rather sordid burlesque, ending with a touch of tragedy when Alençon died prematurely in June, 1584, aged thirty. Catherine de Medici sent mourning clothes to her anticipated daughter-in-law, and Elizabeth, in acknowledging the gift, said that her sorrow was as great as Catherine's, and that she hoped death would soon enable her to rejoin her lost one.

This was the last of Elizabeth's princely wooers. It was high time; for she was over fifty.

But she had not only played with princes. She had flirted much with her own subjects. In Mary's reign she had at least thought about Edward Courtenay, Earl of Devonshire, and had nearly come to grief owing to a plot to set them on the throne together—Courtenay being a descendant of the youngest daughter of Edward IV—and to upset Mary's unpopular Spanish marriage. The Wyatt rebellion led to Courtenay's imprisonment and exile. Wyatt was executed. Elizabeth went to the Tower, through the Traitor's Gate, which had received her unhappy mother, and was kept a prisoner there until sent to Woodstock. She was ultimately released by Philip's influence with Mary.

In 1559, when she had been Queen for a few months, Elizabeth's name was coupled by popular report with that of the handsome Sir William Pickering, whom she had known in the past. In his absence from England, however,

Pickering was supplanted by Lord Robert Dudley. Only a year older than Elizabeth, Dudley had first met her at the Court of Edward VI. A boy and girl friendship seems to have sprung up. At the age of eighteen Dudley married Amy Robsart, to her sorrow and eventual ruin. But, as soon as she came to the throne, Elizabeth took him into favour, made him her Master of the Horse, gave him the Garter, and appointed him to the Privy Council. Rumour was busy with her visits to him day and night. He was of " very goodly person " then, though in later life he became " high-coloured and red-faced."

When Pickering came back to England, London, we are told, betted four to one he would be King. But he was overbearing in his manner, and the Queen continued to favour Dudley.

An interlude in the affair was the renewed suggestion of marriage with James Hamilton, now Earl of Arran and Duke of Chatelherault. He came to England secretly, and saw Elizabeth. In August, 1559, it was supposed that she was about to marry him. But still she kept Dudley near her, and when, a year later, his wife Amy died in suspicious circumstances at Cumnor, stories spread apace. The Queen knew of her death too early, it was said, in fact before it occurred. There was a strong impression that now she would marry the widower. Nor was that all. People were sent to prison for saying that she was already with child by him. Later, it may be noted, a young man appeared in Spain who claimed to be their son, though the claim is not nowadays accepted as true.*

* See Martin Hume, *The Courtships of Queen Elizabeth*, pp. 336-346. "I am most strongly of opinion that Arthur Dudley's tale was false," he concludes.

Lord Robert was very ambitious, and undoubtedly pressed the Queen to marry him. But, much as she was attached to him, and seriously as she allowed herself to be compromised by him, she could not bring herself to take the step. Cecil and others of her advisers were strongly opposed to the idea. She herself asserted that "there was only one mistress in England, and no master." Still, when towards the end of 1582 she lay gravely ill at Hampton Court, and thought herself dying, she named him provisionally as Protector of the Realm.

In the following year she made a curious suggestion—that he should marry Mary Stuart, later creating him Earl of Leicester, which may have been done to facilitate such a marriage. Dudley himself had previously been an advocate of Mary's union with her cousin Darnley, which later took place, and seems still to have clung to his hope of Elizabeth for himself. Her favour to him continued unabated; but her hand she would not give.

Years passed as Elizabeth revolved, or affected to revolve, marriage schemes in her mind, all the while showering gifts and honours on her favourite. Then in 1573 Leicester (as we must now call him) took a second wife, the widowed Lady Sheffield. For some reason the marriage was irregular, for both married again, Leicester's choice being another widow, Lady Essex. The ceremony took place privately in 1578, and Elizabeth never heard of it until nearly a year later, when she was furiously angry. She nearly sent Leicester to the Tower, though in time she forgave him. His wife she never forgave. It was not with her as it was with Catherine the Great. Favourites must not presume to marry.

Leicester, ostentatious, gluttonous, perpetually intriguing and cruel, makes no sympathetic appeal to the reader of his story to-day. But to Elizabeth, whatever the real nature of his relations with her, he was always her "dear Robin." That he pressed for the execution of Mary Queen of Scots* in 1587 without shocking her susceptibilities is not to be wondered at, seeing her own callousness towards women. But his conduct only three months later was really more disgraceful, and it, too, did not revolt her.

Leicester was extremely jealous of the influence which the dashing, handsome Sir Walter Raleigh had acquired over the Queen, who had been lavishing gifts upon him for half a dozen years, while he recompensed her with the most extravagant professions of love. Leicester could not himself loosen Raleigh's hold over Elizabeth; but he bethought himself of another through whom he might accomplish it, his stepson, Robert Devereux, second Earl of Essex, physically a well-graced youth. It was true Robert was only nineteen, while the Queen was fifty-three. In the circumstances, that did not matter. As she grew older, she had grown vainer and, in her turn, more easily charmed. He forced Essex upon Elizabeth's notice, and his purpose was accomplished.

Essex easily cut all rivals out. He and Elizabeth became inseparable, games of cards, etc., keeping them together till the early hours of morning after morning. But Essex, while admirably adapted to win her by his outward charms, was of jealous temper, unbalanced, and

* Leicester is said to have repeatedly urged Elizabeth to put to death this unhappy lady of whom he had once been the suggested husband, and to have suggested her strangling in prison, to avoid the public scandal of the scaffold.

soon utterly spoilt. He abused his position and gradually became insufferable. Incidentally, also, he annoyed her by marrying in 1590 Sir Francis Walsingham's daughter.

His reign, nevertheless, might have continued, had there not appeared on the scene in 1592 a still younger attraction to Elizabeth's eyes. This was Charles Blount, brother of the Earl of Mountjoy, whose years only numbered twenty. Essex, annoyed with the kindness shown to Blount by the Queen, picked a quarrel with him. Seeing him wearing upon his sleeve a little chess queen made of gold, which Elizabeth had given him, Essex sneeringly remarked that "every fool must have a favour nowadays!" Blount could hardly overlook this. A duel was fought in Marylebone Fields, in which Essex was wounded. When the news was brought to Elizabeth, she swore, which was no rare occurrence with her, as is well known. She rightly laid the chief blame on Essex.

The love-affair, however, which has been called the strangest in the whole of history (though it is doubtful whether it is stranger than that between Elizabeth and Leicester) continued, the Queen doting, with intervals of wrath, and Essex insolent, with spells of contrition and professed adoration.

At length he tried her too sorely. She had given him the command of the army in Ireland, partly perhaps to gain a little respite from his troublesome behaviour at Court. In Ireland he mismanaged affairs badly, disobeyed the instructions given him, and finally returned to England without leave. He besought her not to banish him from her presence, and she nominally forgave him. But his hold on her was gone. Desperate, he allowed himself to

make a traitorous plot against her, was found out, and was condemned to death.

He might have escaped his doom even now, had not his unhappy insolence persisted in the very shadow of the scaffold. He was told of the Queen's conditions for his pardon. "Her conditions," he cried, "are as crooked as her carcase!" His words were repeated to her. There was no longer any question of pardon, and on February 25th, 1601, he was beheaded as a traitor. Elizabeth repented bitterly when it was too late, it is said.

Elizabeth was over sixty-seven when Essex died. In little over two years she was dead herself. Her death-bed was one last illustration of her force of character. We know most of the details from the pen of her kinsman Robert Carey, youngest son of Henry, first Lord Hunsdon.

Robert, like his father, was high in her favour, even though she declined to talk of their affinity with her.* She had one serious quarrel with him when he married without asking her permission. As in the case of Leicester's third marriage, and as in Raleigh's, Essex's and many other cases, this angered her extremely. She would not see Carey for nearly three years, and when they met again "our first encounter was terrible," he relates. But he diplomatically told her that she herself was the fault of his marriage, and if she had graced him with the least of her favours he would never have left her or her Court.

She forgave him, and bestowed on him good, if onerous, posts on the Scottish border, where he did his work well. In the spring of 1603 he came on leave to England, and visited the Court. He found that Elizabeth

* See p. 95n.

was ill and " kept her inner lodging." She sent for him to come and see her. When he expressed his hope that her health would long continue, she took him by the hand and wrung it hard, saying, " No, Robin, I am not well." She talked with him of her indisposition, and he could plainly see that she was in a bad state.

This was Saturday night, March 19th. On the next day Elizabeth ordered cushions to be laid for her in " the privy chamber near the private closet," and there she heard service instead of, as usual, in the great closet. From that day she grew worse and worse. She lay on her cushions four days and four nights at least, and could not be persuaded to take food or to go to bed.

So she fought death, which came to her about three o'clock on the morning of March 24th. Her power of speech had gone the previous day, but Carey says that in the afternoon she called by signs for her Council, and, by putting her hand to her head when the King of Scots was named to succeed her, showed that she desired him to reign after her.

The Earl of Cork, in his already quoted preface to Carey's *Memoirs*, had his doubts. " She put her hand to her head, which was probably at that time in agonising pain," he suggests. " The Lords interpreted her signs just as they pleased. . . . What was this but the unanimous interpretations of persons who were adoring the rising sun?"

One who hastened to adore the rising sun was Robert Carey himself. He was acquainted with James, for Elizabeth had employed him in 1587 on the difficult errand of going to Scotland to convey letters to the King, in which she protested her innocence of the death of his

mother. Carey must have impressed James favourably, for he honoured him with good posts to the end of his own life.

When Carey saw that Elizabeth was dying, he wrote at once to James; and now that she was dead he was determined that none but himself should inform the King. He got away from the palace by a subterfuge, for the Privy Council had told him not to return to Scotland until they should order him. But Carey disobeyed, and galloped off to James at Holyrood to let him know that he was King of England as well as of Scotland.

Elizabeth had died hard. But she had been of good general health for most of her long life. Her illness in 1562, when she thought herself dying, is supposed to have been smallpox. As late as the second half of 1602, though nearly sixty-nine, she was riding and hunting, for which she inherited her father's taste. Even on January 21st, 1603, we hear of her riding to Richmond, after recovering from the effects of a chill. Towards the end of February her last illness began; and the rest we know from Carey.

. . . . .

We have said on an earlier page that for the explanation of Elizabeth's curious mixture of character we must look not only to her breeding and her upbringing, but also to a third element. What was this? It was what has been defined as her "uncompleted womanhood," amorous, but averse from union. To marriage she constantly repeated that she had no mind, even when in the midst of negotiations for some marriage scheme.

She was shockingly open in her dalliance with men;

but all the while there is a suspicion that it is not genuine. Something is lacking. She seems afraid to take the last step. There is about her nothing of Catherine the Great, eager to rush to that last step. They shared the admiration for male beauty, and their exhibitions of that admiration are often very similar. But Catherine did not stop there; Elizabeth apparently did.

Was it some physical inhibition, rare but not unparalleled, which caused her to stop? Or did she fear that, if she yielded, she would lose that supremacy to which she clung while breath was in her? When her red hair had given place to a red wig, when the long nose of Anne Boleyn had grown longer, the pointed chin more pointed, the smooth skin wrinkled, the tall figure stooped and "crooked," as the petulant Essex said, and the "heavenly beauty" of which her courtiers assured her had become but a legend, her power still remained. The beauty might be a pretence; but the power was real.

With her vanity, which she had from father as well as mother, the decay of her attractions caused no decline in her coquetry, but rather an increase. At the age of sixty-four she received the French Ambassador, magnificently dressed, but with such a display of her person, when she threw open her robe, as to shock him. The men were able to fool her to the end with the most abject speeches and letters, conveying sentiments which they could not possibly have felt in her old age, however they may have been genuine before.

So here we have the enigma of "the Virgin Queen." Granting her virginity, which perhaps we may—of body, though not of mind—how are we to reconcile it with her

inordinate fondness for the society of men and her reckless behaviour with them? We have suggested the two alternative explanations, that there was a physical reason for her conduct, or that it was calculation which inspired it.

That the former explanation was not unknown in Elizabeth's own lifetime is clear from a passage in a letter addressed to her in November, 1584, by Mary Queen of Scots. It was reported by the Countess of Shrewsbury, writes the captive Queen, that Elizabeth was certainly not like other women (*qu' indubitablement vous n'estiez pas comme les autres femmes*). It seems unlikely that Elizabeth received this letter, or we should expect something disagreeable to have happened to the Countess of Shrewsbury. But what Mary says indicates the existence of a rumour.

If the other explanation is the true one, that Elizabeth's conduct was guided by calculation, that, while she was very susceptible to men, her prudence was such that she kept her passions under control for the whole of life, then it must be admitted that she was a remarkable instance of self-control; to which her mother's resistance of Henry VIII, until she could be sure of marriage and a crown, is very little in comparison.

Perhaps Elizabeth's general attitude towards women may be counted as an argument in favour of the first of the two explanations. She had in girlhood one woman friend, to whom she was much attached, Mrs. Catherine Ashley, her "governess" and a relation of hers on the Boleyn side of the family. She was much upset when Mrs. Ashley was removed from her service at the time of Thomas Seymour's

disgrace. As Queen she renewed her friendship with her, and she visited her on her death-bed in 1565.

Apart from Mrs. Ashley, we do not hear of any women whom Elizabeth took into her confidence. On the other hand, those whom she treated with dislike, injustice, and cruelty were many. To Mary Queen of Scots it is unnecessary to do more than to refer. We have heard already of Amy Robsart; of Lady Essex (the former Lettice Knollys, who was related to the Boleyns), of Lady Raleigh, who was sent to the Tower for marrying Sir Walter; and of other ladies who incurred her wrath by presuming to become wives of her courtiers.

Two more notorious instances may be added, in both of which a Seymour was involved. In 1560 the then young Edward Seymour, recently became Earl of Hertford, secretly married Lady Catherine Grey, younger sister of Lady Jane. When Elizabeth discovered this, she sent them both to the Tower. She pursued the unfortunate wife with vindictive hostility, appointed a commission to inquire into her "infamous conversation" and her "pretended marriage," and, though she released her from the Tower after two years, had her kept in private custody until her death more than another four years later.

Edward Seymour's grandson, William, who succeeded him as Earl of Hertford, and long afterwards had the Dukedom of Somerset revived in his favour, near the end of Elizabeth's reign fell in love with the unfortunate Lady Arabella Stuart, daughter of Charles, Earl of Lennox, and Darnley's niece. It was reported that they were married, and the dying Queen sent Arabella to the Tower. Arabella's worst misfortunes came upon her later, when under James I

Mary, Queen of Scots.

From a portrait, of the school of Clouet, at Chantilly.

she actually married Seymour and was again committed to the Tower, to die.

It is true that Elizabeth had this justification for her severity in the two cases just mentioned. An Act of 1536 had made it treason for anyone of the blood royal to marry without the sovereign's consent. Catherine Grey was a great grand-daughter of Henry VII. Arabella Stuart was a great grand-daughter of Margaret, sister of Henry VIII. Both were therefore undoubtedly of the blood royal, and their marriages without the sovereign's permission were, legally, treason. But a lingering death in captivity, which Catherine actually suffered, and Arabella might have suffered, had not Elizabeth herself been so old, was a terrible punishment for the crime of marriage.

. . . . .

The shadows in the picture are dark. They might have been much darker if we could hold Elizabeth personally responsible for the ferocity of religious and political persecution in her reign. It was not intended, however, to blacken the fame of an extraordinary, and in many ways unique, woman; merely to give a slight idea how extraordinary she was. Her right to the high place which is assigned to her in English history is taken for granted.

CHAPTER VI

TARABAI RANI

To Queen Tarabai* may justly be assigned the leading place among the dominant women of India, though that vast country was never deficient in heroines who have left their impress on the annals of their time.

Tarabai was a Maratha, a member of that race to which *The Gazetteer of India* suggests a Scythian origin, modified by the infusion of Dravidian blood as they came south into India. The Scythians, in their original home on the Central Asian steppes, were "hordes of horsemen, short and sturdy, and skilled in the use of the bow," whose "manner of life was that of pastoral nomads, and their instincts were of a predatory order."

With this brief summing-up of the Scythians in the *Gazetteer* we may compare James Grant Duff's description, in his *History of the Marathas*, of a horde of Maratha free-booters about the beginning of the eighteenth century, when Tarabai was coming into prominence. "They were," says Duff, "an irregular assembly of several thousand horsemen united by preconcerted agreement in some unfrequented part of the country. They set off with little provision, no baggage except the blankets on their saddles,

* Tārābai. The quantities of the vowels in the Indian names are not marked in the text of this chapter, but will be found in the index.

and no animals except led horses, with bags prepared for the reception of their plunder. If they halted during a part of the night . . . they slept with their bridles in their hands; if in the day, while the horses were fed and refreshed, the men reposed with little or no shelter from the scorching heat, except such as might be occasionally found under a bush or a tree; and during that time their swords were laid by their sides, and their spears were generally at their horses' heads, stuck in the ground. When halted on a plain, groups of four or five might be seen stretched on the bare earth sound asleep, their bodies exposed to the noonday sun, and their heads in a cluster, under the precarious shade of a black blanket or tattered horsecloth extended on the points of their spears. The great object of this class was plunder; and the leaders and their troops, though they generally rendered a partial account to the head of the state, dissipated or embezzled the greater part of their collection."

We shall see that the Maratha queen did not fear to take her share in the privations of her soldiery.

Tarabai Rani owed her chance of making a name in Indian history primarily to her marriage into the family of the great Maratha hero, Shivaji Bhonsle, the man who "not only founded a kingdom, but created a nation." It is difficult to believe that, with her strong will, energy and fighting spirit, she would not in any case have done something in her life. But her marriage gave her the opportunity for more than that. Shivaji, born in the Ahmadnagar district of the present Bombay Presidency in 1627, and living until 1680, in his early years conceived the ambition of restoring the Hindu power, so long suppressed

by the Mohammedan conquerors from the North. He organised a following of brave fighters from the great mountain range of the Western Ghats and began his long series of exploits, in which glory and treachery were combined. He led the revolt against the Mohammedan kingdom of Bijapur, whose rulers were overlords of the Hindu Marathas, and captured in turn many of their fortresses. An army was sent against him under Afzal Khan. A parley was arranged, and when the two leaders met Shivaji sprang upon Afzal Khan, and killed him with a terrible weapon, a tiger's claw fashioned out of steel. After this he defeated the dispirited Bijapur forces.

Shivaji's successes went on until, venturing to tackle a stronger power than Bijapur, he met with a temporary check. The Moghal Empire, with its capital at Delhi, was by no means effete yet. But Shivaji did not hesitate to extend his activities to Moghal territories, and in 1664 he fell upon the wealthy city of Surat, on the Gulf of Bombay. Delhi could not tolerate this, and sent so great a force against him that he was compelled to make an honourable surrender. He agreed to do obeisance to the Emperor Aurangzeb; but his reception at Delhi, where he was kept virtually a captive, infuriated him, and he made his escape, to renew his warfare against the Mohammedans. Once more he sacked Surat. He set himself up as an independent raja, and in 1674 had himself crowned in state at his fortress capital, Raigad, on a crag rising 4,000 feet above the Konkan, or coast district of Bombay.

In 1680 Shivaji died, and his kingdom was immediately menaced with disaster, of which one cause was a dispute over the succession. He had numerous wives, of whom

the first had borne him a son, Sambhaji, while the third had a five-years younger son, Rajaram. Sambhaji, though he inherited some of his father's military talent, was addicted to pleasure and of an untrustworthy character. When Shivaji had made peace with Aurangzeb in 1665, it was arranged that Sambhaji should have command of a force of 5,000 cavalry in the Imperial army. War breaking out again between the Marathas and the Moghals, the young man sided with Delhi, and captured one of his father's fortresses. Later, falling out with Aurangzeb, he fled and threw himself on his father's mercy. Shivaji did not punish him beyond confining him in another fortress, Panhala, in Kolhapur, where he was when Shivaji died at Raigad.

Shivaji is said to have contemplated dividing his kingdom between his two sons. But his third wife, Soyarabai, who had repeatedly urged on him the claims of Rajaram, seized the opportunity of Sambhaji's absence at Panhala to have her son alone put on the throne. The story varies. According to one version, news of his father's death was kept from Sambhaji. According to another, he heard that he was dying, and came by a fast camel from Panhala to Raigad, only to find himself too late. In any case Rajaram was in possession, supported by Soyarabai and her powerful family, the Shirkes.

Sambhaji, however, was popular with the garrison of Panhala, and an army sent against him by Rajaram's adherents deserted to him. He was soon able to march on Raigad, where he had the gates betrayed to him by some within. He took a terrible revenge upon those who had tried to keep him out of the succession. Though he did no harm to his half-brother, he had Soyarabai walled up in

her own house and massacred her chief supporters, to the number of two hundred. Then he had himself crowned, and started to carry on his father's policy.

Fortune favoured him at first, and an unexpected ally came to his assistance : the Moghal prince Akbar. Though he was the favourite son of Aurangzeb, he had been discovered conspiring against his father and now sought refuge with Sambhaji, who received him gladly and gave him a cavalry command. But Akbar's advent proved no unmixed blessing. In the first place, it led Aurangzeb himself to take up the war with greater vigour; and secondly it inspired Soyarabai's family with an idea of revenge for her death. They suggested to Akbar that he should be ruler of the Deccan, giving a small kingdom to Rajaram as his vassal. Akbar refused and revealed the plot to Sambhaji, who promptly had the conspirators executed, including all of the Shirke family on whom he could lay hands.

Sambhaji's reign only lasted eight years. He fought not without courage, but dissipated his energies by attacking the Abyssinian intruders on the Konkan coast and the Portuguese at Goa, as though the struggle with the Moghals were not enough. He fell, too, into a worse dissipation, with wine, drugs, and women, and left his unpaid troops to keep themselves by plunder and to lose the semblance of an army which Shivaji had given them. Finally, in 1689, irretrievable disaster overtook him. Though Aurangzeb's forces were unable to capture Raigad, they captured the Maratha king. Sambhaji died bravely, under terrible torture. He could have saved his life by turning Mohammedan, but declined to change his

faith. Akbar pitilessly condemned him to a piecemeal death.

The rest of the Maratha royal family were still safe in Raigad, and the question of the succession to the throne again arose. Sambhaji left behind him a wife Yesubai, with a son of about nine, named after his famous grandfather Shivaji. If this boy succeeded, who was to be regent during his minority? A council was called, and Yesubai suggested two alternatives, herself or Rajaram.

Rajaram was now twenty-eight. Since the failure of his mother's attempt to set him on the throne in 1680 he had lived in confinement at Raigad, not ill-treated, but kept under observation and compelled to walk very warily. Yesubai had been a kind sister-in-law to him, for which he bore her much gratitude throughout life. She was quite willing for him to be made regent; and so the council decided.

Rajaram is recorded to have addressed the council, begging them to have no hard thoughts of the dead Sambhaji, but to give to his son all the loyalty which they had felt for the great Shivaji. He declared himself ready to serve the new king faithfully.

It was resolved to prosecute the war against the Moghals with energy, under Rajaram's command in the field, while Yesubai and her son remained in Raigad. The same night Rajaram left, taking with him his two wives, Tarabai and Rajasbai.

This is the earliest mention we get of Tarabai. She was the daughter of Hambirrao Mohite, a fine cavalry officer under Shivaji, who had been made *Senapati*, or commander-in-chief, and in 1675 led the first Maratha army to cross the

river Narbada and raid the Broach district of Gujarat. We may suppose Tarabai, when her husband became regent, to have been in her early twenties or even younger; but the date of her birth is not stated. She was his senior wife. The other, Rajasbai, was of the Ghatge family. As we shall see, the ladies were no friends, though open enmity did not show itself for years.

Rajaram found the legacy of the command of the Maratha army an onerous one. Thanks to Sambhaji's shortcomings, the Moghals were in occupation of most of the Maratha country. Rajaram proceeded to Panhala, when he was soon besieged by the enemy, who at the same time laid siege to Raigad.

Before long Raigad fell, and Yesubai and the young Shivaji were prisoners in Aurangzeb's hands. He sent them to Delhi, where they were befriended by one of his daughters, an amiable princess. For eighteen years they remained in captivity, but were treated with consideration. Indeed, on his return to Delhi, Aurangzeb took a fancy to Shivaji, whom he called Shahu ("the good one"), the name by which he is usually known in Indian history. He did not even insist on his embracing Islam, as he first contemplated.

Meanwhile Rajaram had not thought it prudent to remain at Panhala, but made his escape, with his wives, to Vishalgad. His wisdom was shown by the fact that Panhala very shortly suffered the same fate as the Maratha capital. So desperate did the position appear that Rajaram decided on a very bold step. He saw no chance of reorganising the Maratha forces in their own country. Vishalgad was comparatively safe at the moment, so he left

his wives under the protection of the garrison there, while he himself retired as far south as Jinji (Ginjee) in the South Arcot district of Madras. It was a dangerous journey, for the whole countryside was in a state of anarchy and swarmed with lawless characters, discharged soldiers and deserters. But in the disguise of a poor pilgrim he managed to get through, and once at Jinji set about his task of building up his army again.*

At Vishalgad in 1691 Tarabai gave birth to her only known child, a son to whom the name of Shivaji was given. Soon after she and her co-wife Rajasbai were summoned to join their husband at Jinji. He had, it appears, been in communication with Yesubai at Delhi, in spite of the war existing between the Marathas and the Moghals. In one letter she urged him to assume the title of Raja, since the Marathas would fight better for a free than for a captive king. To this he agreed, but only on the understanding that, if Shahu (as we may now call him, to avoid confusion) should ever be set at liberty, he would resign the title to him again.

In a second letter Yesubai remonstrated with her brother-in-law over a story which somehow had reached her at Delhi. She heard that he was living with a mistress. How could he get discipline in his army, she asked, if he lived thus irregularly himself? Let him send for his lawful wives from Vishalgad. Again he took her advice. But if it had been perilous for him to make the journey to Jinji direct, it would have been far worse for his wives.

---

* Kincaid (C. A. Kincaid and D. R. Parasnis, *History of the Maratha People*) compares this retreat of Rajaram to Madras to that of the Serbians to Corfu in the Great War.

They were accordingly conducted from Vishalgad to the Konkan coast, taken by sea to Pondicherry, and then sent by a safer overland route to Jinji.

For some years Tarabai lived in this place of exile, which was the temporary Maratha capital. During these years history is silent about her. In 1693 her rival, Rajasbai, gave birth to a son, named Sambhaji, an event which cannot have pleased her, as it promised the usual contest as to the succession unless Shahu regained his liberty and continued the elder line. Shahu's release was not probable during Aurangzeb's lifetime; but the Emperor was already seventy-six.

Aurangzeb at seventy-six, however, was astonishingly full of vitality, and still cherished his ambition of ruling over the whole of India. While the Marathas retained their independence this ambition could not be realised; and they stoutly refused to yield. Not only was Rajaram established at Jinji, but the lieutenant whom he had left behind him when he escaped from the Deccan, Ramchandra Bavdekar, waged an incessant guerilla warfare there against the Moghals, and succeeded in recapturing Panhala and other strongholds. It seemed to Aurangzeb that the best way to check this activity was to strike hard at Jinji. He had already sent one of his ablest generals, Zulfikar Khan, to besiege the place. But Zulfikar, though a good soldier, had ideas of his own. Aurangzeb must die some day, and his empire might fall to pieces. Zulfikar wanted a piece, which he would be best able to secure by arrangement with the Marathas.

The warfare in Madras, therefore, was of a very polite order, neither side striving to damage the other seriously.

At length Aurangzeb realised that something was wrong, and sent his youngest son, Kam Baksh, to take up the command. This had not the desired effect. Zulfikar was furious at his supersession, and did nothing to help the prince, who in his turn grew disgusted. Around his army the Maratha bands kept up a war of attrition, which inflicted on him occasional heavy losses. In 1696 he agreed to a truce with Rajaram, and raised the so-called siege of Jinji.

On hearing of the truce, Aurangzeb recalled his son in disgrace. Hostilities broke out again, and this time more seriously. Zulfikar Khan, who had resumed command of the Moghal army, was determined to vindicate his name by capturing Jinji, which he hoped to achieve by starving out the garrison. Previously the Marathas had little difficulty in getting supplies into Jinji; but now they were entirely cut off.

Nevertheless, the war continued to be of a curious kind. Rajaram's great desire was to escape from the town before it should fall; and this he was able to gratify by a friendly arrangement. In the Moghal army were many Maratha nobles, discontented with their own government. These included two of the Shirke family who had escaped Sambhaji's massacre, and some of Tarabai's kinsmen, the Mohites. With their assistance, and the consent of Zulfikar, Rajaram was smuggled out of Jinji, and by the end of 1697 he was once more in Vishalgad.

He was compelled to leave his family behind. But when, in January, 1698, the Moghals penetrated the defences of Jingi—entering, it was said by a secret path accidentally discovered on the hillside, and compelled the surrender of

the fortress, Zulfikar handed over Tarabai, Rajasbai, their sons, and the rest of Rajaram's dependents to the Shirkes, who sent them to the Deccan. It is impossible not to believe that Zulfikar had agreed to this with Rajaram at the time of his escape. After all, he had gained his chief end, which was to be able to announce to Aurangzeb the capture of Jinji.

A definite peace between the Moghals and the Marathas looked possible, and negotiations were actually begun. Rajaram's loyalty, however, brought them quickly to an end. He demanded as an essential the release of Shahu, whereon the Emperor angrily refused to proceed any further, and the war went on.

Rajaram's family was scattered. While he himself was in the field, Tarabai and Rajasbai, with their sons, were at Panhala, and a third wife, Ambikabai, at Vishalgad, with her only daughter. He had established his capital at Satara, not far from Poona ; but it was obviously unsafe to place his family here, for Aurangzeb at once made it the objective of an army and began the siege.

At first success fell to Rajaram, who captured a few Moghal strongholds. Then Zulfikar Khan appeared on the scene again, and the fortune of war changed. Rajaram was defeated and compelled to beat a hasty retreat, fighting all the way for fifty miles until he reached the shelter of Sinhgad. He was suffering from inflammation of the lungs, which he had had previous to his return to the Deccan, and which the hardships of the retreat had brought on again in an aggravated form. When his lieutenant, Ramchandra, came to see him, he found his master spitting blood and obviously very ill. In a few days he was

dying. Calling his ministers to his bedside, he exhorted them never to give up until their King was free and the Moghals driven out of the land. On March 5th, 1700, there passed away, at the age of thirty-seven, the man who has been called the second founder of the Maratha Empire, and who certainly was, in spite of all vicissitudes, a courageous follower in the footsteps of his great father Shivaji, and a prince of much higher character than most of his age.

On hearing of his death Ambikabai insisted, against all opposition, in committing *sati* (suttee). Not so Tarabai and Rajasbai. The enmity which they had cherished for one another broke out openly; and it was Tarabai who took the initiative. As senior wife, she called the council together, at which Ramchandra, named by the dying Rajaram its president, had come from Sinhgad to attend. Tarabai proposed that her eight-year-old son Shivaji should be king—which meant that she should be regent. Ramchandra pointed out that Shahu was still king, as Rajaram had only ruled in his name. If Tarabai were willing to be regent for Shahu, however, he was quite ready to serve under her. No, said Tarabai, Rajaram's son and hers must be king. "He is the Shivaji of whom the prophecy runs that he will conquer all India from Attock to Rameshwaram."*

The imperious woman, now possibly about thirty years of age, gained the day. She had her adherents on the council, and the rest dared not resist. Ramchandra himself threw in his lot with her. The young Shivaji was crowned at Panhala, and, as a measure of precaution,

* Kincaid and Parasnis, II, 108.

Rajasbai and her son were imprisoned. Rajasbai was destined to have her revenge for this one day.

The state of the Maratha country was grievous when Tarabai seized the reins of power. Satara fell within a few weeks of Rajaram's death. Panhala followed, and later Vishalgad, Sinhgad, and other places, until by 1704 not one of the principal Maratha strongholds was out of Moghal hands. But neither Tarabai nor the Maratha people were crushed. Under her generals, forces went ravaging and plundering far into the enemy's territories, even to Malwa and to Ahmadabad. She herself was an inspiration. Making her permanent headquarters nowhere, she went hither and thither, sparing herself nothing. "Living the life of a common trooper, exposed to the sun, sleeping on the ground, Tarabai was everywhere, encouraging her officers, planning campaigns, organising victories. Nor did the soldiers resent her interference. So clear was her vision, so unerring her judgment, that she was equally welcome on the battlefield and in the council chamber."*

It is evident that the military talent of Hambirrao Mohite had not failed to descend to his daughter.

Harassed by the character of the war, Aurangzeb again consented to the opening of negotiations; but again they were stopped by the Maratha demand for the release of Shahu. This demand we must presume to have been put forward by Ramchandra, for Tarabai had only to lose if it were granted.

On the renewal of fighting, the Marathas applied themselves to the recovery of the strongholds in the

* Kincaid and Parasnis, II, 110.

Deccan. Panhala was gained by means of bribes to a traitorous commander, and was made by Tarabai her headquarters. Satara was also won, followed by other fortresses. Aurangzeb himself was compelled to retreat, with heavy loss. Perhaps this hastened his end. At any rate, in March, 1707, he died at Ahmadnagar, after eighty-eight years of life and forty-nine years of reign. With his death the Moghal power was tottering to its fall.

The removal of Aurangzeb made a great difference to Tarabai's fortunes. His eldest son, Shah Alam, was proclaimed Emperor at Delhi; but the second, Azim Shah, disputed the throne, and getting possession of Shahu, set him free, on the advice of Zulfikar Khan, it is said, and no doubt with a view to enlisting Maratha sympathy on his side. Azim Shah did not live to test their gratitude, for he fell in the first and only battle against his brother.

Shahu came south to claim the Maratha throne, after eighteen years' absence from his country. Tarabai, however, had no intention of resigning her power without a struggle. She declared that Shahu was an impostor, and not the Shivaji, son of Sambhaji, who had fallen into Moghal hands in 1689. The latter, she said, was long dead. She called on her ministers to take a most solemn oath to be faithful to her son's cause, but only found three ready to do so, though the three included Ramchandra Bavdekar. The rest qualified the oath by the provision that Shahu must be proved false.

Joined by a large number of Maratha chiefs, Shahu advanced to the Poona district, where Tarabai's army met him. She was not herself with it, but remaining at Panhala, entrusted it to two of her chief generals. Shahu now took

the boldest step of a not over-bold life. He rode forward on his elephant towards the hostile army, and called on the two generals to acknowledge him. They did so, and came over to him, followed by their personal troops, and Tarabai's army melted away. Satara surrendered soon after.

The first news of Shahu's reception by many of the Maratha nobles had angered Tarabai very much, and looking for a scapegoat she blamed Ramchandra. Stirred by this injustice, he opened communications with Shahu, whereon she threw him into prison, allowing him the honour of silver chains. But when she heard how her officers had deserted her on the battlefield and that Satara was lost, she felt desperate. She had Ramchandra brought to the palace, and putting on his knees her son and, it is reported, her stepson, begged him to protect them. He was no longer a prisoner, but her chief minister. Ramchandra pledged his faith, and kept his word.

Shahu, after the capture of Satara, made it his capital and had himself crowned there at the beginning of 1708. Later in the year he set out to crush the enemy. Tarabai was not strong enough to defend Panhala, but fled, whereon the place fell, as did Vishalgad. On the advice of Ramchandra, she went to Malvan, in the very south of the Konkan, close to the small state of Savantwadi. With her she took her son, whom the historians describe as an "idiot," his little wife Bhavanibai, whom he had married after his coronation, Rajasbai, and her son. Meanwhile Ramchandra held out successfully against Shahu's forces.

But if Tarabai was not at the battlefront, neither was she idle in the military sphere. She appealed to the ruler

of Savantwadi for assistance, and not in vain. He agreed to furnish her with a serviceable force, with which, early in 1710, she appeared before Panhala. She demanded and obtained its surrender. This accomplished, she set up a new Maratha capital at the neighbouring town of Kolhapur.

Shahu had returned to Satara, vexed at the ill-success of his campaign against Ramchandra. An amiable and not unintelligent prince, he had a strain of indolence in his character, which caused him to tire of the continual exertions that were necessary in the kind of warfare familiar to the Marathas. He was handicapped by the fact that eighteen out of his thirty years of life had been spent at the Court of Delhi; and his unrelenting enemy, Tarabai, did not fail to take advantage of this. She continued to spread the story of his being an impostor, and no descendant of Shivaji. By this means she detached from him many of his adherents, some of whom, such as Sindia, ancestor of the Maharajas of Gwalior, even entered the Moghal service. By these and other defections Shahu's kingdom began to dwindle away.

Suddenly there came a dramatic change in the situation, totally unexpected by Tarabai, who, in two years from her establishment at Kolhapur, saw all her schemes brought to ruin. First, she was betrayed by the general to whom she had confided the defence of the Poona district, the core of the Maratha country, which had not hitherto given allegiance to Shahu. Almost at one blow the whole of the Poona strongholds passed into Shahu's possession.

The second of the causes of Tarabai's downfall was Shahu's decision to take as his chief adviser the celebrated Balaji Vishvanath, a Brahman from the Konkan, who had

been in the royal service from the reign of Rajaram, but had not figured prominently before. It was this man who founded the line of the Peshwas,* so famous in Maratha and also in British Indian history. Being both a good soldier and a highly skilled diplomatist, he lost no time in displaying his talents in both directions. He organised a new army for Shahu, whose home forces were much depleted by the necessity of attending at once to the Moghals in the north and to Kolhapur. The delighted Shahu conferred on him the title of "Army-Maker." And now Balaji turned to diplomacy.

The strength of Tarabai's position, apart from her own abilities, lay in the loyal support of her chief minister, Ramchandra. Unfortunately for her, a disagreement arose between them over some matter. Balaji seized his opportunity. Ramchandra's interest in his duties being less keen than formerly, he was able to get through a message to Rajasbai—whose captivity, therefore, would not seem to have been very strict—in which he suggested upsetting Tarabai and her son and substituting Rajasbai's son, Sambhaji, on the throne. He must have sent her money, too; for Rajasbai won over the garrison of Panhala fortress by bribery, and a *coup d'état* followed. Rajasbai had her son made king, and Tarabai and her son took their rivals' place in prison.

It was now 1712, and for thirty-five weary years Tarabai remained a nonentity before, astonishingly (since she must have been then on the way to eighty), she began a new career of political activity. For the first portion of

* *Peshwā*, Prime Minister. Balaji and his descendants were emphatically *the* Peshwas, and so are generally called.

this long period, about eighteen years, she was Rajasbai's captive at Kolhapur, during which the echoes of many stirring events reached her, in which she would have loved to play a part. Kolhapur, under the weak Sambhaji, had little say in affairs, in consequence of which Balaji, now Peshwa, was able to establish the complete ascendancy of Satara. The Moghal Empire was torn by internal dissensions, and in 1719 Balaji obtained for his master Shahu very notable concessions from the Emperor Mohammad Shah, including nearly all the territory of the great Shivaji, and the right to levy tribute in the Deccan.

In 1720 Balaji died; but his son Bajirao, who succeeded him as Peshwa, was another strong man to whom Shahu was well content to leave the control of his affairs.

Sambhaji at Kolhapur, though at first he had observed the peace with Satara, gradually began to intrigue against Shahu with the Nizam-ul-Mulk, Mohammedan Viceroy of the Deccan and founder of the kingdom of Hyderabad. At length he made an open break and crossed into Satara territory, taking with him not only an army but also the women of his family, his mother, his wife Jijabai, and the captive Tarabai, for whom this proved very lucky. Sambhaji was completely defeated, and his treasure, stores, and womenfolk were captured. Politely Shahu sent Rajasbai and her daughter-in-law back to Sambhaji, and was about to send Tarabai with them, when she protested that she did not want to go. "It is my lot to live in confinement everywhere," she said, "so it is useless to move me from one prison to another."

Shahu consented that she should live under his charge, and gave her an old palace at Satara, in which she dwelt for

the next seventeen years. She had lost her son some years ago, and as to a successor to his claims—well, that was her secret. She had got free from Rajasbai, and could bide her time.

More news of great events in the outside world came through to Tarabai at Satara. Bajirao, by arrangement with the Nizam, invaded the Emperor's territory, and even succeeded in reaching the outskirts of Delhi. Then Nadir Shah, the Persian, sacked Delhi and left it in ruins, but retired home before Bajirao, who called on Hindus and Mohammedans alike to repel these alien invaders, could reach him.

In 1740 Bajirao died, his son, the second Balaji, succeeding him as third of the Peshwa line. About this time Poona became the Peshwa's headquarters, Satara being left as the royal capital of the Marathas. Next year Sambhaji, whose position since his defeat by Shahu had been that of a vassal prince, paid a visit to Satara, and came to a private agreement with Balaji that he should have the succession to the Maratha throne if Shahu, as was probable, should die without an heir.

Shahu had had numerous wives, of whom two were then alive, Sakwarbai and Sagunabai, one a violent woman, the other gentle and her husband's favourite. Sagunibai had borne him a son, but he died while still an infant. She proposed to him that he should adopt a young man, Mudhoji Bhonsle, who was a relative not only of his, but also of hers. Sakwarbai, one of the Shirke family, fought this suggestion bitterly until Sagunibai died in 1748, when she herself supported it, with an eye to her influence as Queen-Mother. Shahu, who was near his death, assented

to the suggestion, but suddenly was told that a messenger from Tarabai begged an audience of him.

The story which follows* is very curious. Tarabai's messenger, on being admitted, asked the King why he should adopt an heir while there was a descendant of Shivaji ready to succeed him. Shahu replied that he himself had no son, Sambhaji of Kolhapur had no son, and that Tarabai's son, Shivaji, had lost his only son in infancy.

Now came Tarabai's secret. When her son died, she stated, his wife, Bhavanibai, was pregnant. She gave birth to a boy at Panhala, but Tarabai feared the jealous hatred of Rajasbai, and persuaded Bhavanibai to entrust the child to a Rajput couple, of whom the wife had just lost her baby. Tarabai gave her grandson a dose of opium of sufficient strength to make him look like dead. Then she and her daughter-in-law began to wail loudly, telling those who came to inquire what was the matter that the child was dead. Obtaining leave from Sambhaji for the burial, Tarabai conveyed the child to the Rajput couple, and buried instead a bundle consisting of two dead fowls and a loaf, wrapt in cloth.

For five years, continued Tarabai, the child lived in safety. Then a rumour reached Rajasbai, who caused a search to be made for him. But the Rajputs succeeded in getting him away to Tuljapur, in Hyderabad; "and there he still is," she concluded.

It is not surprising to hear that Shahu was sceptical, and asked for corroboration of the tale. But Tarabai produced a trustworthy witness, who confirmed on a most solemn oath what she had said. Shahu gave way

* See Kincaid and Parasnis, II, 298-9, from unpublished Maratha papers.

and accepted as his heir the boy, whose name was Ramraja, his father's with the parts reversed. He had no time to bring him to Satara before he died, in December, 1749. On his death-bed he sent for his Peshwa and besought him to guard the interests of the kingdom and the dynasty, giving him letters empowering him to act, and bestowing on his family the hereditary post of Peshwa.

It is clear that Balaji was in league with Tarabai. He knew that he was hated by Sakwarbai, who not only had tried to have him removed from office, but had attempted to assassinate him. He may have known also that she had written to Sambhaji of Kolhapur, urging him to adopt Mudhoji Bhonsle and, on Shahu's death, to claim the whole Maratha kingdom. He had taken his precautions. Around Satara he had collected an army of 35,000 men. As soon as Shahu was dead, troops entered the place, and arrested the leaders of the opposition, who were sent away to safe custody elsewhere. Then the council was summoned, and Balaji produced Shahu's letters, which no one ventured to dispute. Ramraja was king, Balaji was his chief minister—and, what Shahu had not felt it necessary to mention, Tarabai was his grandmother.

It remained to dispose of Sakwarbai, who, while she lived, might always be a danger. There was a way out of this difficulty. It would be only pious of her to commit *sati* on her late husband's pyre. Even her own brother urged her to it, for the family honour, and the unhappy woman consented. Balaji generously erected a memorial on the site of the sacrifice, which may be seen at Satara to-day.

Ramraja was now escorted from Tuljapur to the banks

of the Krishna river, where his grandmother met him. On the day declared by the astrologers lucky he was brought into Satara, and after his coronation his reign began. Though he was twenty-seven years of age, he agreed to Balaji's suggestion that his training up to now had not fitted him for conducting the government, which had therefore better be left in the Peshwa's hands, with assistance from Tarabai. As a consolation he was given three wives, all of Tarabai's family, the Mohites, and settled down to a life of ease.

Ramraja, therefore, was not likely to prove an obstacle to the Peshwa's and Tarabai's craving for power. But the alliance between them, firm while they were in danger together, was unsubstantial when they had gained their joint end. Tarabai found in the course of a few weeks only that, so far from Balaji being inclined to defer to her, he was determined to be the ruler in the state and to keep the young king under his control. This was intolerable to her, whom neither old age nor long years of captivity had weaned of imperious ambition. She began to plot to change the state of affairs.

Her method of procedure was crafty, but not crafty enough to deceive the Peshwa. She announced her wish to go to Sinhgad, where a temple stood over the ashes of her husband Rajaram, and to spend the remainder of her days in devotion there. So she went; but as soon as she arrived she dropped the pretence of religion and recommenced her intrigues. The commander of the fortress fell under her sway, and agreed to make an attempt to rescue Ramraja from the Peshwa's clutches.

A polite invitation from Balaji to be a guest at his son's

wedding in Poona Tarabai prudently evaded. It was soon followed, however, by a peremptory demand that both she and the Sinhgad commander should come to Poona, or it would be the worse for them. It was clear that they had been found out, and they dared not refuse to go. Nothing serious happened to Tarabai, who was respectfully treated by the Peshwa. The commander was imprisoned, and then, on Balaji's suggestion, tried by the King himself and condemned to the loss of his post at Sinhgad.

This check, much as it angered Tarabai, did not daunt her. She was determined to get possession of her grandson by some means or other, and so strengthen her position against the Peshwa's. She went to Satara, made a specious pretext for entering the fort, and there, by a combination of her dominating personality and a long purse, gained over the chief officers to her side. Then she laid her plans.*

It was now November, 1750, and Ramraja came back to Satara, where he received a friendly invitation from his grandmother to pay her a visit in the fort. He went, and was engaged by her in private conversation while his escort waited. She urged on him the advisability of dismissing Balaji and his adherents from office, and relying on the support of the Deccan party, Marathas, who were opposed to the Brahmans. The young man was not convinced of the advisability of this ; and Tarabai, though much put out, was compelled to let him go.

On the morrow she made a second attempt, and

* Of another of her intrigues, perhaps not unconnected with these, we shall hear presently.

Ramraja played into her hands. It was a great festival day, that of *Champasasthi*, and when he received from her an invitation to dinner it was very hard for him to refuse. One of his officers begged him not to go; and at first he tried to make an excuse to stay away. But Tarabai's messengers urged on him how hurt she would be at a refusal on this day, of all days, and represented the unreasonableness of supposing that she intended any harm to him whom she had saved in childhood and had put on the throne when he was grown up. He wavered, and returned no definite answer. A little later he decided to go, and with supreme folly rode alone to his grandmother's palace, without an escort. It was not discovered till too late that he had gone, and his staff, following him to the palace, were refused admittance and threatened with a volley by the guards.

Ramraja, on his arrival, had been well received, the dinner had been excellent, and his grandmother was most amiable. When it was time to go, he took his leave of her and set out on his horse to the outer gate of the palace. Finding this barred and guarded, he demanded that it should be opened. The guards refused and said they were acting on Her Highness's orders. Indignantly Ramraja rode back to ask an explanation of his grandmother, but found, " instead of that malignant beldame, the house full of soldiers."*

He was a prisoner, and never regained his freedom, though he lived for another twenty-eight years. What is more, his successors on the Maratha throne were all virtually prisoners, though kept in gilded captivity, in

* Kincaid and Parasnis, II, 316.

Satara fort, until the end of Maratha independence came. That, of course, was not Tarabai's doing; but she set the example, which the Peshwas found it to their interest to follow.

Balaji was away when this happened, fighting against the Nizam in Hyderabad. The old Nizam-ul-Mulk, who had turned his viceroyalty of the Deccan from a dependency of Delhi into an independent kingdom, had died in 1748. Balaji strove to put an end to troubles with his successors by adding Hyderabad to the Maratha territories. While so occupied, he suddenly received startling news from Satara, which caused him to hurry home at full speed.

He had acquiesced in Tarabai's seizure of Ramraja, doubtless thinking that he could put matters right when he had finished with the Nizam, and that he could then appear as the young king's deliverer. But the new intelligence was much more serious. To understand the import of it, it is necessary for us to go back to the reign of Rajaram.

Gujarat had been raided by the Marathas, as we have heard, as early as Shivaji's time. But it was Rajaram's appointment of one Khanderao Dabhade as his collector of tribute—a favourite Maratha practice when they did not definitely occupy a country—on the Gujarat borders which led to the establishment of Maratha power there, and ultimately to the foundation of the kingdom of Baroda. Khanderao Dabhade gradually worked his way into Gujarat and penetrated even into Kathiawar. Under him he had an able lieutenant, Damaji Gaikwar, from whom, or rather from whose nephew and adopted son, the Maharajas of Baroda trace their descent. Ultimately Khanderao

was given the title of *Senapati*, and Damaji was made his second in command. They both died about the same time, 1721, Khanderao being succeeded in his post by his son Trimbakrao, and Damaji by his nephew Pilaji.

The rise to power of the Peshwa Bajirao was ill received by very many of the Maratha chiefs, and among them were Trimbakrao and Pilaji, who had now established himself in the town of Baroda. Bajirao was determined to collect the revenues of Gujarat himself, and obtained the nominal sanction of the Moghals to do so. An open breach followed, and Bajirao invaded Gujarat. A decisive battle was fought in April, 1731, at Bhilapur, near Baroda, in which Trimbakrao was slain, Pilaji seriously wounded, and their army totally routed. Pilaji was murdered next year by agents of the Moghal viceroy of Gujarat, the suzerainty over which Delhi still claimed, though unwillingly sanctioning Maratha activities in the territory.

Trimbakrao left a son, Yashwantrao, who was a heavy drinker and an opium-taker. Pilaji's son, Damaji the second, on the other hand, was a man of exceeding ability. In consequence Yashwantrao, though *Senapati*, was entirely overshadowed by his lieutenant. There was also a third party to be considered, Umabai, widow of Khanderao Dabhade; and soon after the accession of Ramraja at Satara this old lady made her influence felt.

Like so many of the Marathas, Umabai hated the power of the Peshwas, Konkan Brahmans as they were, and usurpers of the royal authority as they appeared to the Maratha chiefs. She had detested Bajirao as the cause of her son Trimbakrao's death at Bhilapur, and was eager to obtain revenge on his son Balaji. There was also a

pecuniary grievance. After the battle of Bhilapur the defeated side had been obliged to agree to the payment of half the revenues of Gujarat to Shahu through the Peshwa. No payment was made in Shahu's reign, that easy-going raja not insisting on it, and the Peshwa being too busy otherwise to enforce it. But after Shahu's death Balaji presented a demand for the half-revenues and arrears. Umabai, threatened with the loss of half the income of the Dabhade family, protested loudly and looked round for an ally to help her in a struggle with the Peshwa. There was one awaiting her in Tarabai.

Some time in the monsoon season of 1750 the two old ladies, whether by arrangement or not, came together and discussed the situation. Tarabai agreed to use her influence on behalf of the Dabhades, while Umabai promised to furnish troops from Gujarat if Balaji should prove obdurate. At the beginning of October the two met again, their pretext being worship at a famous temple. Kincaid suggests that possibly now the plot against Ramraja, carried out a few weeks later, was hatched.

Umabai sent to Balaji to ask him to abate his demand, but met with a blank refusal. She then went herself to Hyderabad, but, though he was polite, he was firm. He must have half the revenues of Gujarat and payment of arrears. She departed and made ready for war. On her side, Tarabai executed her plot against Ramraja, only two days after Umabai's failure to move the Peshwa. Certainly appearances are in favour of the seizure of Ramraja being part of the conspiracy with Umabai against Balaji.

Yashwantrao being incompetent, Umabai gave the command of an army of 15,000 men, mixed Marathas and

Gujaratis, to Damaji Gaikwar, who in March, 1751, was in royal territory, and on the 11th was within thirty miles of Poona. Defeating a force which came out from the Peshwa's capital to challenge him, he went on to Satara and was welcomed by Tarabai.*

Damaji's triumph was short-lived. On March 15th the Peshwa's general, Trimbakpant Purandare, with superior forces, fell upon him and drove him in retreat into a position from which he had no escape northwards. Balaji himself, having made a forced march from Hyderabad, arrived outside Satara, and after reducing the neighbouring forts joined his general. Damaji was in a hopeless situation, and his Maratha troops began to desert. He was forced to agree to a conference with the Peshwa, who now added to his demands by asking for the cession of half of Gujarat and of any future territorial conquests. Further, an indemnity must be paid. Damaji protested that, as he was only deputy for the Dabhades, he had no authority to yield to these demands, whereon the conference broke up.

Balaji followed the abortive negotiations with a surprise attack on Damaji's camp, capturing him, his son Sayaji, his brother Khanderao, Yashantrao Dabhade (who had accompanied the army, though not in command) and Umabai. He sent all the prisoners to Poona and turned his attention to Satara.

* By some historians, and in the *Gazetteer of India*, Damaji is represented as having been called upon by Tarabai to "rescue" her grandson from the power of the Brahmans. I am aware that the points of view of the Peshwa's adherents and the Marathas differ. But can there be any doubt that Tarabai had already "rescued" Ramraja before Damaji began his march? If there is, then we shall have to reject the whole story of what happened at Satara in November, 1750, as a Brahman invention.

Tarabai, on the news of Damaji's failure, was beside herself with rage. She was with difficulty dissuaded from venting it on the three younger sons of Damaji, who had been left in her keeping at Satara. She made Ramraja her victim instead. As he still declined to dismiss Balaji from the post of Peshwa, she cast him into a damp dungeon, had him fed on coarse food, and declared that he was an impostor, not her grandson at all. When Balaji appeared again before Satara and asked for the King's release, she declined outright.

Balaji began the siege, but found it impossible to take the fort by storm. It is situated on a high rocky hill, 2,300 feet above sea level, and was in those days practically impregnable except by starvation. Balaji gave up the task, and went to Poona to see what he could do with Damaji. The latter still held out against his demands, and it was not until March, 1752, after having been for months in close confinement, and for the last part of the time in irons, that he finally gave way. He agreed to the payment of the tribute, with arrears, to the cession of half Gujarat and of any future conquests, to a big indemnity, to the maintenance of a contingent in the Peshwa's army in the Deccan, and to a contribution towards Ramraja's support.

So ended what Kincaid calls the "Women's War." (It might be called the "Old Women's War.") Umabai was ruined, and the power in Gujarat went to Damaji Gaikwar, who made himself Raja in Baroda and handed on his throne to his family. Tarabai was secure at Satara, from which Balaji did not like to try to oust her, for fear of the opinion of the Maratha chiefs. She sternly repressed an attempted mutiny of the garrison by beheading the

leader. "Such was her superhuman strength of will and vigour," says Kincaid, "that his fellow-conspirators, thinking her an evil spirit, and therefore invincible, let themselves be executed without resistance." She then consented to a conference with Balaji at Poona.

The Peshwa was not hard in his terms. He merely insisted on Tarabai's recognition of his position and her dismissal of the commander at Satara, a personal enemy. He asked again for Ramraja's release, but as she would not hear of it he abandoned the unhappy man's cause and agreed to leave him her prisoner—a truly base return for Ramraja's constancy to him. It has been pleaded on Balaji's behalf that he sacrificed Ramraja for the sake of the peace of the kingdom.* But his action was inconsistent with honour.

Tarabai was not content with her arrangement with Balaji unless he would exchange oaths with her in one of the holiest temples in Poona. So on September 14th, 1752, they mutually swore to observe their words. Tarabai further took an oath that Ramraja was not her grandson, but a mere impostor whom she had foisted on Shahu. Thereby, it may be noted, she made herself out a perjurer to Shahu in 1749. But Balaji apparently pretended to believe her now. Perhaps it eased his conscience in deserting Ramraja.

Tarabai returned to Satara, leaving the Peshwa the real ruler of the Marathas. She did not cease to intrigue against him, however. When he resumed his war against the Nizam, she thought she saw an opportunity. The Nizam's army, reinforced by that brilliant French soldier, de Bussy

* Kincaid and Parasnis.

(Charles-Joseph Patissier, Marquis de Bussy-Castelnau), and his troops, invaded Maratha territory. Messages were sent to Tarabai and were favourably received. But, when the invaders got within sixteen miles of Poona, they were recalled by Balaji's counter-stroke in Hyderabad; and eventually the Peshwa was able to conclude a peace favourable to the Marathas.

For years we hear no more of Tarabai. She remained at Satara, gloating over her wretched captive, who both physically and mentally had become a wreck, though the fact that he lived until nearly the end of 1778 seems to argue that his treatment was not quite so rigorous as is sometimes represented, or else that he was of astonishing strength.

In the outside world events happened to interest Tarabai. In 1760, when she must have been about ninety, she heard of the death of Sambhaji of Kolhapur, where once she had ruled herself. He left a widow, Jijabai, of whom she had unpleasant recollections as a friend of Rajasbai, but no son. Jijabai adopted a boy from a branch of the Bhonsles, and ruled Kolhapur in his name.

In January, 1761, came the crushing disaster to the Maratha arms at Panipat. So successful had Balaji and his generals been hitherto that Delhi itself was in their hands. But terrible invaders from the north appeared, the Afghans, under Ahmad Shah Durrani, and in a fight to the death the Marathas were totally defeated. Their leader, Sadashivrao, Balaji's cousin, was killed, as was his own gallant elder son Vishvasrao, the troops were massacred wholesale as they tried to escape from the fortified position which they had held, and the Maratha ladies, who in those days were allowed to accompany their husbands to war, were

made slaves. The Afghans retired home after their great victory. But Balaji, who was suffering from consumption and was not present at Panipat, never recovered from the shock, and in a few months died, at the age of only forty. Tarabai is said to have rejoiced exceedingly at the disasters and death of the Peshwa.

Balaji was succeeded by his younger son, Madhavrao, who was only sixteen years old, but who was destined in a short life of only twelve more years to gain for himself the name of the greatest of the Peshwas. He came to Satara to be invested by poor Ramraja; for, in spite of his captivity, and in spite of Tarabai's oath nine years earlier that he was an impostor, the Marathas still looked on him as their king, without whose investiture the chief minister could not take office. Ramraja was similarly called upon to invest Madhavrao's next two successors.

Madhavrao dared to do what his father had not dared, that is, to insist that Ramraja should have greater liberty and be allowed to go about as he wished within the precincts of Satara fort. It is not clear whether this was in the lifetime of Tarabai; for the date of the terrible old queen's death is not known. Somewhere in the nineties it may be presumed she passed away, and the worst of his martyrdom was over for Ramraja. He lived to adopt a son from a branch of the Bhonsle family at Nasik, who succeeded him as Shahu II and continued the part of the *fainéant* kings of Satara.

There is a strange similarity between the story of Tarabai and her grandson and that, to which we shall come in a later chapter, of Tze-hi, Empress Dowager of China, and her nephew, the Emperor Kwang-hsu. In each case

we have the vindictive woman imprisoning and torturing the youth whom she herself has elevated to the throne. The two stories together furnish a striking illustration of the Hindu theory of reincarnated hates. Tarabai's hatred was reborn in Tze-hi; Ramraja's hatred, very natural in the circumstances, in Kwang-hsu. Whence came they, and when will they be manifested again?

CHAPTER VII

"THE BEASTLY BRACE"

Yet sauntering Charles, between his beastly brace,
Meets with dissembling still in either place,
Affected humour, or a painted face.
In loyal libels we have often told him
How one has jilted him, the other sold him,
How that affects to laugh, how this to weep,
But who can rail so long as he can sleep?
Was ever prince by two at once misled,
False, foolish, old, ill-natured, and ill-bred?*

THE ladies referred to in these uncharitable lines were the Duchess of Cleveland, aged thirty-eight, and the Duchess of Portsmouth, aged thirty, mistresses of King Charles II. It might be argued that they are not types of dominant women, inasmuch as they did not rule men, but only one man. Their sway over Charles, however, was, while it lasted, of such a character as to lead other men who wished to stand well with the King, or to bring influence to bear upon him for the furtherance of their political and personal aims, to pay assiduous court to them and to rank themselves under the banner of one or the other. Moreover, both ladies had no little influence in shaping the destinies of England by the interference which they were allowed to have in domestic and foreign affairs. Therefore they

* From *An Essay on Satire* (1679). See p. 177.

may, without undue stretching of the meaning of the word, be called dominant, or at least temporarily dominant, women.

Barbara Villiers, successively Mrs. Barbara Palmer, Countess of Castlemaine, and Duchess of Cleveland, was certainly not "ill-bred," if breeding has any reference to descent. Her father, William Villiers, Lord Grandison, was a gallant Cavalier gentleman, who, after good service for the King against the Parliamentarian forces, was fatally wounded at the siege of Bristol by the royal army. Her mother, Mary Bayning, was a daughter of the first Viscount Bayning of Sudbury, and maternally descended from the Earls of Dorset.

There, unfortunately, the claims of Barbara Villiers to good breeding stop. The removal of her father in her very early childhood and the inattention of her mother (who seems to have been only sixteen when she gave birth to her in the autumn of 1641, and who, not long after her widowhood, married again her first husband's cousin, Charles Villiers, Earl of Anglesea) left her to grow up uneducated and without restraint. She took full advantage of the license allowed her. Harry Killigrew, one of the two sons of the witty "Tom," Master of the Revels after the Restoration, did not err in truth, if he erred in politeness, when he described her as having been "a little lecherous girl,"* though in consequence of his indiscretion he was dismissed from his post of Gentleman of the Bedchamber of the Duke of York, at the King's request. When she was but fifteen and was living in her stepfather's house near

* Pepys, Diary, October 21st, 1666. I have gone fully into Barbara's girlhood in *My Lady Castlemaine*, so do not dwell on it here.

Barbara Villiers, Countess of Castlemaine and Duchess of Cleveland.
From a painting by Lely in the National Portrait Gallery.

St. Paul's, she began a disgraceful intrigue with the later notorious rake, Philip Stanhope, who had just become the second Earl of Chesterfield.

Notwithstanding this, she was able, only about two years later, to make an honourable marriage. Her unlucky husband was Roger Palmer, a man of good descent, who was educated at Eton and at King's College, Cambridge, and who was destined to do credit to school and college by his intellectual attainments. He fell violently in love with Barbara Villiers and carried her off from the competition of various suitors whom her beauty attracted. The financial resources of her stepfather and her mother were poor; and Roger Palmer was rich. On April 14th, 1659, they were married, Barbara being then in her eighteenth year.

Such a marriage could not be a happy one. Barbara did not cease from her acquaintance with Chesterfield. Palmer discovered the fact, and of course bitterly resented it. Chesterfield was removed at the beginning of 1660 by the necessity of having to fly the country after killing a young man, Francis Wolley, in a duel at Kensington. He took refuge at the Court, such as it was, of the exiled Charles II, in Holland, and then proceeded to France.

Palmer, like Chesterfield, had remained a Royalist at heart, though living in England under the Commonwealth. Early in 1660 he decided to join the King; for it was known to the Royalists that great things were on foot. It is true that it is only inference by later writers, not any statement by contemporaries, that leads us to believe that Roger and his wife went to Holland, the husband bringing a welcome contribution of money from his own purse.*

* See *My Lady Castlemaine*, pp. 29-32.

He little suspected into what new danger, or rather into what utter disaster, he was plunging his married life.

The Restoration came, and on May 29th Charles II rode through London in triumph. On that night, according to two accounts published after his death, the King was with Mrs. Palmer. We know that their first child, Anne Palmer, so called, afterwards Countess of Sussex, was born just under nine months later.

It is not necessary to go into the familiar details of the liaison between Charles and Mrs. Palmer. The husband appears not at first to have noticed its growth. He lived with his wife in King Street, close to Whitehall Palace. But the gossips soon began to take notice of the King's familiarity with the lady; and in July, 1661, Pepys speaks of her plainly as "the King's mistress." Palmer had accepted Anne as his daughter, but his eyes must now have been opened to the state of affairs between his wife and the King. He did not, however, break with her. Perhaps he still retained some of his infatuation for her. Then at the end of 1661 there came a final disgrace for him. A patent was made out for him as Earl of Castlemaine, "the honour," as Pepys notes, being "tied up to the males of the body of his wife, the Lady Barbary; the reason wherefore everybody knows."

The peerage bestowed on Palmer was an Irish one. According to Clarendon, his wife had feared that he would actually try to stop the passing of the patent. He did not want the title, and he never took his seat in the Irish House of Lords. Very soon he became a Roman Catholic, which, together with his being always a loyal subject of the King, prevented his suing for a divorce.

But if Lord Castlemaine did not want his title, his wife was very pleased with it, especially as the transaction was carried through in spite of any opposition which might have been offered to it by the honest old Earl of Clarendon, ever mindful of his master's honour, and a bitter enemy of the mistress. Charles chose an Irish peerage for Roger Palmer purposely to prevent the patent having to come before the English Lord Chancellor.

Charles had a special motive in gratifying Barbara Palmer by this gift of a title. He had decided to yield to the nation's expectations that he should take a wife, to be Queen of England. The princess chosen was Catherine of Braganza, daughter of the King of Portugal, whose marriage to him had been proposed as long as sixteen years ago. In the autumn of 1661 it had been publicly known, through prayers in the churches, that she was to be Queen; and in the following May she arrived in England.

Amongst the Beaufort Manuscripts* is an instructive letter from the Marchioness of Worcester to Lord Cornbury, elder son and afterwards successor to the Earl of Clarendon, which throws a curious light on the situation that arose within three weeks of the royal marriage.

"The King," writes Lady Worcester from Hampton Court on June 10th, 1662, "likes her [Catherine] very well, is much taken with her witt and conversation, sayes he will out-doe all that pretend to be good husbands, and that it is his owne fault if he be not happy, for he is as happy as any man can be. He is as extremely fond and spends all his time with her, which I thinke is an argument that

* *Historical MSS. Commission*, Report 12, Appendix 9, pp. 52-3.

he is well pleased. . . . We have as yet a very unsettled family, nothing at all in order. Not one Lady of the Bedchamber named besides my Lady Suffolke. . . . There are twenty intrigues and factions stirring, but with these I doe not meddle, and therefore will not venture to give you any account of them; only this much I will tell you, that there are great endeavours used to make ——, you know who, a Lady of the Bedchamber, but it is hoped by many that they will not take effect; a little time will now show us a great deale. I will say no more of this for feare of burning my fingers."

The lady indicated by —— in this letter is obviously Lady Castlemaine. Somewhere about the date when the Marchioness of Worcester wrote, there was born Charles "Palmer," second child of Charles II and Lady Castlemaine. The King was present at a second christening; for the putative father, Lord Castlemaine, had insisted on a baptism in the Church of Rome.

But Charles was determined to do more for his mistress than tacitly acknowledge her son as his. He had promised to present her to the Queen. Catherine had heard of the lady's existence before she left Portugal, and was resolved not to meet her. When, therefore, he presented Lady Castlemaine in her chamber at Hampton Court, though she made an effort to receive her politely, she fainted and had to be carried out.

There was a further humiliation in store for Catherine. Lady Worcester tells us how the appointment to her bedchamber was talked about at Court in early June, 1662. But Catherine declined to consider the idea. Charles enlisted Lord Chancellor Clarendon—of all people!—to

endeavour to persuade her. So good a fight did the Queen put up that it was not until June 1st of the next year that the warrant for the appointment was at last issued. Catherine had suddenly yielded, and now, to the general astonishment, began to treat the mistress as a friend.

All the while Lady Castlemaine had been receiving extravagant gifts from His Majesty; so much so that at a Court ball in February Pepys describes her jewels as richer than those of the Queen and the Duchess of York put together. Yet there was a cloud in her sky which threatened trouble. A new maid of honour to the Queen had arrived from Paris, the fifteen-year-old Frances Stewart, a connection of the Royal Family, in spite of the different spelling of the name. King Charles immediately began to pay her attention, though he never seems to have overcome her scruples, and in the spring of 1666 she ran away from Court to marry her cousin, the Duke of Richmond and Lennox.

Notwithstanding the appearance on the scene of Frances Stewart, Lady Castlemaine's position became outwardly more secure. The Earl had left England, and in April, 1663, she moved from his house in King Street to Whitehall Palace, where the King assigned her apartments connecting with his own cabinet by a private stair. Here she was compelled to invite Frances Stewart every night that Charles took supper with her. Yet she retained her ascendancy over him, not lessened by the birth of her second son, Henry, whom he was doubtful of being his offspring, as it certainly was not Lord Castlemaine's. Her conduct, as royal mistress, was no more discreet than the King's, and her name was freely coupled with those of Henry Jermyn, Sir Charles Berkeley (commonly supposed

to be the father of her son Henry), and the Hamilton brothers. Her sudden conversion to the Church of Rome at the end of 1663 did not make her critics kinder to her reputation.

Matters went on in much the same way until 1665, when the mistress definitely began to play a part in politics, having previously confined her activities in this line to befriending or abusing the King's ministers. Now the commercial and colonial rivalry between England and Holland had reached a point where an outbreak of war seemed unavoidable. Very bitter feeling existed in England against the Dutch, and for once Lady Castlemaine and the Roman Catholics, and also the Duke of York (though still for another seven years a member of the Church of England), were ranged on the popular side. Not only did Lady Castlemaine, as a Roman Catholic, dislike the Protestant Dutch, but she was a close friend of the Count of Molina, the Spanish Ambassador in London.

One person was determined, if possible, to prevent an Anglo-Dutch war: Louis XIV of France. He was at the time treaty-bound to Holland, and he was most anxious to be friendly with England. He tried to influence Charles through the medium of Frances Stewart, whose mother and the Queen Dowager Henrietta Maria had been intimately acquainted in Paris; but Frances was too young and had no taste for politics. Then he resolved to send an extraordinary embassy to England, headed by the Duke of Verneuil. The envoys found themselves steadfastly opposed by the alliance of the royal mistress with Molina; and Charles, apart from the lady's promptings, was not inclined to run counter to popular feeling. War

broke out. On June 3rd, 1665, the Duke of York won his naval victory at Southwold Bay, and a few days later the Spanish Ambassador celebrated the event by a banquet to Lady Castlemaine and their friends.

The French envoys in vain followed Charles and his Court to Oxford, whither the plague had driven them. They could not stop the war, and returned home. The struggle went on, without a decisive result, in spite of the famous Dutch raid up the Thames, until it was ended by the Treaty of Breda. The Anglo-French rupture was scarcely serious. The combatants sparred rather than fought.

. . . . .

By the end of 1666 Lord Castlemaine had decided to part with his notorious wife for ever. He had received the King's leave to travel abroad, and went. The wife's power at Court was not decreased thereby.

It has been said that Lady Castlemaine's political activities before this had been confined to befriending or abusing the King's ministers. They went perhaps a little further. In 1662 the ousting of the faithful Sir Edward Nicholas from the Secretaryship of State and the substitution of Sir Henry Bennett, afterwards Earl of Arlington, were attributed to her influence. She may also have had something to do with the appointment of Sir Charles Berkeley to the Privy Purse, though the King was always much attached to Berkeley. At any rate, she, Bennett and Berkeley worked hand in glove to rule Charles. Clarendon writes of the two men that they were "most devoted to the lady and much depended on her interest."

Lady Castlemaine's aversions were Clarendon himself and the Lord Treasurer Southampton, who refused to pay her court and, as she well knew, steadfastly warned the King against her. Together they formed a strong alliance in opposition to her influence. In May, 1667, Southampton died, making, as Clarendon laments, a fatal breach in his own fortune.

This was very soon evident. Clarendon had won unpopularity in connection with the Treaty of Breda, by persuading Charles not to summon Parliament until after the signature, and then (if this was really part of his advice) to prorogue it at once. So great was the outcry that it is clear that an impeachment of the Lord Chancellor would follow when Parliament next met. On August 26th, 1667, Charles called Clarendon to him and explained that to save him he must dismiss him from office. Clarendon could not see the necessity for this, and very unwisely "found a seasonable opportunity to mention the lady," as he says in his account of the interview. Charles made no answer to this part of the argument, but, after two hours, took his departure, leaving the dismissed minister to go home alone.

The scene is very well known of old Clarendon walking through the Privy Garden at Whitehall, amid the rejoicing triumph of what Evelyn in a letter calls "the buffoons and the misses, to whom Clarendon was an eyesore." Prominent, of course, as Dr. Pierce told Pepys, was Lady Castlemaine, running out of her bedroom into her aviary overlooking the garden, clad only in her smock until her woman brought her her dressing-gown.

Clarendon had no doubt that it was "the power of the

great lady" which had contributed most to his ruin; and so thought many others. He had hosts of other enemies, but it was his attitude towards the lady and her resentment of it which decided the King to abandon him.

A curious sequel to Clarendon's fall was a reconciliation, for a time at least, between Lady Castlemaine and her kinsman, the Duke of Buckingham.* For a great part of their lives they were unfriendly, and often bitter enemies. Whether the cause was some family quarrel or his jealousy at her position as mistress, we do not know. His sister Mary used to call her "Jane Shore," and hoped she would come to the same end. Buckingham's hostility was manifested soon after the Restoration, and, when in 1663 he gave a grand entertainment to the King and Queen at Wallingford House, he left her name out of the list of invited guests. He, with his wife, Edward Montagu, and Sir Henry Bennett, in the same year formed a "committee" for "the getting of Mrs. Stewart for the King," so as to oust her. This is what Lord Sandwich told Pepys. If Bennett was actually one of the committee, it is strange how quickly he had changed from the devotion to her which Clarendon noted in the previous year.

Variations of friendship and enmity, however, were common enough in those days; and accordingly we find Lady Castlemaine in 1667 intervening violently with the King on Buckingham's behalf. The turbulent Duke had got himself twice into the Tower, first for very outspoken remarks on the Court, and secondly for taking up the leadership of the Parliamentary Opposition and, it was

* She was descended from the first wife of the Sir George Villiers who died in 1606; he from the second wife.

suspected, harbouring ideas against the throne. Not only was he sent to the Tower the second time, but all his offices were taken from him.

A great quarrel ensued between the mistress and the King, with pretty words on both sides. She notably called him a fool, since only a fool would suffer his business to be carried on by fellows who did not understand it, and let his best subjects be imprisoned. Very soon they made it up, Buckingham was released, and when Clarendon fell he was reappointed to his former offices.

No one was more pleased—except perhaps the lady—than Buckingham when Clarendon was removed. The two were reputed to be on better terms now than at any time before or after.

It is true that this state of affairs did not last long. The fault was Buckingham's. Not content with being again of the Privy Council and the most powerful of all the ministers, he had designs to increase his favour with the King—which survived his scandalous duel with the Earl of Shrewsbury at the beginning of 1668—to an even greater extent. His designs were twofold: that Charles should have a new wife, and that he should meanwhile have a new mistress or so.

It was an amazing proposition that he put up to Charles, to divorce his blameless, if barren, wife; and to the King's credit he would not hear of it. Lady Castlemaine, too, strongly opposed the idea. She was on terms of odd friendship with Catherine. How would she stand with a new wife, probably some French princess?

As for the suggestion of a new mistress, this, of course, cut still more directly at her position. But that was just

what Buckingham wanted. His kinswoman stood in the way of his boundless ambition. So he contrived to introduce to the King the pretty actress, Mary ("Moll") Davis, of the Duke's Playhouse, and Charles succumbed at once. We know from Pepys that in January, 1668, his attentions to Moll one night at the theatre made Lady Castlemaine "melancholy and out of humour, all the play, not smiling once." The actress was already reputed a royal mistress; and others were hinted at, including soon the famous Nell Gwynn.

Charles did not cease his lavish gifts to Lady Castlemaine. This, however, failed to satisfy her, and she began—if, indeed, we can say that—to live a disorderly life herself, going like Charles to the stage and taking up Charles Hart, of the King's Playhouse, on whom she squandered some of the money her royal lover gave to her.

It was scarcely reassuring to her that early in 1668 the King made a splendid present to her of Berkshire House, near St. James's Park, in which, when she had furnished it, she took up her residence, thus leaving her apartments in Whitehall. It must have been at Charles's suggestion that this was done. Subsequently she built Cleveland House, a magnificent residence, on part of the Berkshire House estate.

Still Lady Castlemaine was generally reckoned to "rule" the King, though in politics Buckingham was predominant. He conceived a new idea. He hated the Duke of York, perhaps from boyhood, when he and his brother, after their father's death, were allowed to share tutors with Charles and James at Richmond. With a view to preventing the Duke's succession to the throne he

now urged the King to legitimise the young Duke of Monmouth, his son by Lucy Walter.

One result of Buckingham's latest scheme was to drive the Duke and Duchess of York into alliance with Lady Castlemaine. Previously they had at least tolerated her. The Duchess's sympathies with the Church of Rome, soon to be openly declared, inclined her to unite with an opponent of the Presbyterian Buckingham; and the Duke, though he had no reason to doubt his brother's good faith towards him, was bound to welcome so powerful an ally against the scheming minister.

A great change in English foreign policy was now imminent. Hitherto during Charles's reign the relations between England and France, from no fault of Louis XIV, had been cool, and at one time, as we have seen, the countries were nominally at war. At the beginning of 1668, after secret negotiations with Louis, who found Charles's demands too high, England formed a triple alliance with Holland and Sweden. But in the spring of 1669 Sir H. Cholmly, calling on Pepys at the Navy Office, told him of some proposals he had made of a league with France in return for a sum of money. He said that the Duke and Duchess of York, the Queen-Dowager Henrietta Maria, and Lord Arlington (the former Sir Henry Bennett) supported the proposals, although the last-named was of the Buckingham faction. Further, "my Lady Castlemaine is instrumental in this matter, and, he says, never more greet with the King than she is now."*

* Pepys, Diary, April 28th, 1669. This is Pepys's last reference to Lady Castlemaine. In a very few months' time he had, through failing eyesight, to discontinue the writing of his Diary.

It is strange to find Lady Castlemaine placed on the French side, as she had previously been pro-Spanish, and therefore anti-French; and the Buckingham faction mentioned as if anti-French, when Buckingham himself always appeared to show French sympathies. It must be admitted, however, that as far back as twenty months ago there had been rumours of Lady Castlemaine's retirement to France in return for a handsome pension from the King. As a matter of fact, she obtained the pension, but did not for many years retire to France. Instead, she took up a new lover, Jacob Hall, a rope-dancer celebrated for his looks and figure.

Louis XIV did not find the task of wooing England easy. He wished to persuade Charles to enter into an alliance directed against Holland, and also, the further to secure him to his interests, to make him promise to become a Roman Catholic. Apparently he came to the conclusion that his friends in England were insufficient for his purpose. It is said that he thought of buying Lady Castlemaine's support, but was warned by Colbert, his ambassador in London, that she was not to be trusted. So he played another card. Charles, who prided himself on his fond belief that women did not rule him, always admitted that his youngest and only surviving sister, Henrietta, fourteen years his junior, (alone of women, as he said) had a hold upon him. She had married Philippe, Duke of Orleans, the French King's brother. In May, 1670, Louis decided to send her on a political mission to England, which she was anxious to visit for family reasons, though perfectly willing to be a political agent as well.

On May 16th the Duchess of Orleans landed in England.

As is familiar to readers of history, her mission was highly successful. On June 1st Charles signed, through the Roman Catholic members of the "Cabal" ministry, the first, secret, Treaty of Dover, not venturing to take Buckingham, Lauderdale, Ashley, or other non-Romanists into his confidence in the matter. Nor was Lady Castlemaine allowed to know about it, in spite of her religious views.

By this treaty Charles obtained a subsidy of £150,000, with another £225,000 a year when he should join Louis in war against Holland. In addition, he was to declare himself a Roman Catholic. Henrietta returned to France well pleased with her success in politics. Her visit had also been very agreeable otherwise, for splendid entertainments had been given to her and her suite. It may be noted that Sir Ralph Verney, writing to a friend near the end of May, says: "Our bravery is like to bee at an End, but 'tis certaine Lady Castlemaine hath farre exceeded all the French Ladies both in Bravery, and Beauty too."

However, among these French ladies was one who attracted the attention of King Charles, with notable results to himself, to her, and to Lady Castlemaine, and with no little effect on English history for some years. This was his sister's twenty-one-year-old maid of honour, fair-haired and innocent of expression, Mademoiselle de Kéroualle.

Louise Renée de Kéroualle* was the elder daughter of Guillaume de Penancoët, sieur de Keroualle, a Breton

* The family spelt their name variously Kéroualle and Quéroualle, and other spellings found in France are Kéroel, Kéronal, Kérouasle, and Kénouazle (Mrs. Colquhoun Grant, *From Brittany to Whitehall*). In England we see also Querouille, Carwell, Carewell, Carowell, and Keerewell.

Louise Renée de Kéroualle, Duchess of Portsmouth.
From a painting by Pierre Mignard in the National Portrait Gallery.

gentleman and a good soldier, and his wife Marie de Plœuc, descendant of some of the best families in Brittany, and noted for her looks. Evelyn, when he met them in England in June, 1675, speaks well of them, saying that the father "seemed a soldierly person and a good fellow, as the Bretons usually are," and that he never made any use of his daughter's favour with King Charles, while "his lady had been very handsome, and seemed a shrewd, understanding woman."

Nothing much is known of Louise's early days. She had an elder brother, Sebastien, and a younger sister, Henrietta. Her early days were spent at her father's château at Guiler, near Brest. The Sieur de Kéroualle was not well off, and sent Louise to Paris, probably to live in the house of his brother's widow. The scandalous *Secret History of the Duchess of Portsmouth*, published in 1690, makes him first send her to a lady at Quimper, where her conduct was very indiscreet. It is also alleged that when she went to Paris she came under the notice of François de Vendôme, Duke of Beaufort, who was a friend and patron of the family, that they used to have meetings in the Tuileries Gardens, and that when in 1669 he set out for Candia, to rescue the Venetians from the besieging Turkish forces, she accompanied him in the disguise of a page. This seems all pure legend. We do know that her brother Sebastien accompanied Beaufort to Candia. Beaufort was killed there by the explosion of a mine, and Sebastien returned to France, soon to die from a wound received in a brawl in Provence. Before this happened his sister had become maid of honour to the Duchess of Orleans.

In attendance on " Madame," as Henrietta was styled at the French Court, the young girl was much admired for her beauty, and much pursued. It seems true that she had a flirtation at least with the Comte de Sault, a well-known rake. Anyhow, the charge was often brought up against her in later years.

The beauty which had attracted courtiers in France fascinated Charles very quickly. He is alleged to have protracted the negotiations over the Treaty of Dover in order to keep his sister's maid of honour in England, and when Henrietta was leaving to have asked her for a souvenir of her visit. The Duchess asked him to choose something from her jewel-case, whereon he laid a hand on Louise, and said he would prefer this. His sister said it was impossible, as she was responsible for her to her parents.

It is not to be supposed that either Louis XIV or Henrietta had any idea of introducing Louise de Kéroualle to England in order to capture Charles's vagrant heart. It seems just an accident, of which Louis was able to take advantage later. Some writers, it is true, would credit him with the design from the first; but, in that case, why was Louise not left behind?

The Treaty of Dover, by which the wavering Charles was at last induced to ally himself with France, was nearly wrecked within a month of its signature. The beautiful Henrietta, aged only twenty-four, died suddenly on the night of June 29th, in circumstances which appeared mysterious, especially to those in England who had seen her so recently in her triumphant splendour. Poison was at once suggested. It was known that her husband was a

jealous and suspicious man. Charles, prostrate with grief, openly cursed his brother-in-law as a murderer. Another man who was very hard hit was Buckingham. He had always been a devoted admirer of Henrietta, and had indeed so compromised her with his attentions once, when he was on a visit to France, that Charles's mother had asked her son to recall him. He vied with the King now in his grief and wrath. For a time it looked as if the Treaty was doomed. But gradually matters calmed down. The French official report on the cause of death was that it was cholera. The Duchess had imprudently bathed in the river just before she was seized with internal pains. (The modern medical opinion seems to be that it was peritonitis which killed her.) A French mission of condolence was sent over to England and was received by Charles, who in turn despatched Buckingham to Paris with a message of thanks for it.

Buckingham saw an opportunity of pleasing his master, and at the same time striking what he hoped would be a final blow at the remains of Lady Castlemaine's power. Now that his sister was dead, he asked the King would it not be right that he should look after her young maid of honour and put her in attendance on Queen Catherine? Charles joyfully agreed; and when Buckingham reached France he found Louis also ready to agree, if he had not already thought of the idea himself. We do not know how far Louise de Kéroualle understood what her duties at the English Court would include. After protesting that in her sorrow over her mistress's death she wanted to take the veil, she at last consented to go, and her parents, of whom we have heard Evelyn's good opinion, gave their

permission. It only remained to bring her over to England.*

Buckingham escorted her to Dieppe, and left her there while he went to arrange for a royal yacht to take her from France to her new home. He was so slow—according to one account he lost himself in the pleasures of London—that she waited at Dieppe a whole fortnight, and it was finally Ralph Montagu, English Ambassador in Paris, who rescued her and, on the yacht's arrival, had her escorted to England by some of his own suite. Buckingham's conduct was very foolish. The lady never forgave him for it; and he had ruined his chance of profiting by such influence as she might gain over the King.

As though in anticipation of his institution of a new mistress-in-chief, Charles had, on August 23rd, bestowed on Lady Castlemaine a fresh title, which was not extended to her husband. She became Duchess of Cleveland, with remainder to two of her sons; Charles, the eldest, and George, the third, who had been born during the royal visit to Oxford in 1665. As for Henry, the second, though he ultimately recognised him as a son of his, for the present he still had his doubts. In spite of the new honour which he conferred upon her, however, Charles was quite out of love with the Duchess of Cleveland, and probably never again had the old relations with her. He did not press for her removal to Paris, and continued his visits. For love he soon had a new object, apart from his actress friends.

---

* Lord Halifax observes, in his *Character of King Charles*: "Mistresses were ecommended to him. . . . It was resolved generally by others whom he should have in his arms as well as whom he should have in his counsels."

Her sway over him had been very great for ten years. She had not only charmed him with her beauty, but she had cowed him with the violence of temper for which, among other things, she was renowned. She had certainly few intellectual gifts, but sex appeal and imperiousness had combined to hold him her vassal. We have seen how she played her part in politics, domestic and foreign, and how she drained the royal finances. In financial matters she still continued to have her say. Politically she counted no more.

The new favourite was installed in rooms in Whitehall Palace, in virtue of her post of maid of honour to the Queen, and Charles began to pursue her with ardour, as the courtiers observed with amusement. Evelyn describes her as, in his opinion, "of a childish, simple, and baby face"; Charles Lyttelton as "wondrous handsome," with "as much wit and address as ever anybody had." She was a great contrast to the Duchess of Cleveland, being of a gentle disposition and always attentive and obliging to the Queen. When she developed her power she showed herself not exactly avaricious, but determined to extract as much money as possible from the King. In political spheres she used her influence steadfastly in the interests of her native country, so that Charles never wavered long from the course to which he bound himself by the secret Treaty of Dover—a treaty confirmed by a mock one signed in Paris by Buckingham at the end of 1670, with the omission of any reference to Charles's promised conversion to the Church of Rome. Charles, however, carefully refrained from making any attempt to fulfil his promise, in spite of the urgings of Louise after she had become official mistress.

The maid of honour showed no haste to take up this position. She was very discreet, would only receive Charles in her chamber, though he used to call on her every day, and gave no ground for scandal. This may have been art. It certainly made the King's passion keener; but it caused apprehension to the French Ambassador, and to Louis XIV when Colbert informed him how slowly matters were going.

Louise's fall, however, came at last, after she had been at the English Court nearly a year. It appears to have been engineered by the intriguing Lady Arlington, who had been a daughter of Louis of Nassau, natural son of Prince Maurice. She entertained a house-party at Euston in October, 1671, during the King's vist to Newmarket for the races. Louise de Kéroualle, Colbert, and Evelyn were among the guests, and Charles used to pay a daily visit. One day a "mock marriage" was proposed between Louise and the King, and was carried out to the end. Evelyn, who protests that he was not present at the "bedding," as some alleged, writes: "I acknowledge that she was for the most part in her undress all day, and that there was fondness and toying with that young wanton. . . . It was with confidence believed that she was first made a *Miss*, as they call these unhappy creatures, with solemnity at the time."

There can be little doubt Evelyn is correct. On July 29th, 1672, there was born Charles Lennox, son of the King and the maid of honour. Strangely the Duchess of Cleveland bore a daughter the same month; but she certainly was not the King's child, being universally credited to John Churchill, who, at the age of twenty-two,

was on his way to his triumphant position of Duke of Marlborough by very disgraceful first steps. The story of his intrigue with the King's ex-mistress is too well known to need repetition. Charles took the affair with cynical good humour. He did not care even when he found the young soldier in compromising circumstances in the Duchess's house. Nor did he cease to yield to her never satisfied demands for more money, more honours. By 1675 all her children except Barbara, the daughter by Churchill, were in the peerage.

The birth of Louise's son had been hailed by Louis XIV with great satisfaction, and he sent her a congratulatory message through Colbert. He was in hopes that this event would still more firmly rivet the English king to the French interests. Already, in the March of 1672, Charles had performed one part of his engagements under the Treaty of Dover by declaring war on the Dutch. But his announcement of adhesion to the Church of Rome did not come; nor could Louise recommend it, in view of the state of feeling in England concerning "Papists." Even so mild a step as his Declaration of Indulgence led to a fight with Parliament, which ended in the extortion of his consent to the Test Act after it had passed both Houses in March, 1673. All Roman Catholics had to retire from office; the Duke of York, though not yet an avowed one, declined the Test and resigned all his posts, and Louise de Kéroualle, who lost her place as maid of honour, thought it advisable to dismiss the Roman Catholics in her service.

Still, in spite of the popular hatred for her—it is said that she was the most detested of all the favourites—her hold over the King did not relax. In August, 1673, he created

her Duchess of Portsmouth, after Louis XIV had given his consent to her naturalisation as an English subject. Louis himself bestowed on her the ducal fief of Aubigny, with estates in Berry, which had formerly belonged to a branch of the Stuart family, but had lapsed to the French Crown on the death of the Duke of Richmond, husband of Frances Stewart.

The new Duchess had the diplomacy to keep at least on outwardly good terms with her predecessor as chief mistress. They are described as meeting daily in the Queen's apartments; and there were no recriminations. They could well afford to share the plunder, and as Colbert wrote home to France, one of the ladies deceived the King by her infidelities and the other sold his secrets. Charles was not perturbed by the "infidelities" and did not know about the selling of his secrets.

Louise's schemes were many. One, according to Colbert, was that she was to be the future Queen of England. He says that she talked from morning till night of Catherine's ailments, as if they were mortal. Catherine, indeed, was always sickly, but she was not destined to die until twenty years after her husband.

Another scheme was to get the Duke of York, widowed in 1671, remarried to a French bride. Louis also desired this, but whereas his candidate was his cousin, the Duchess of Guise, hers was a Mlle. d'Elbœuf, of the house of Lorraine. James had shown no haste to remarry, being temporarily content with a mistress, and when he finally took a second wife in November, 1673, his choice was the young Marie-Beatrice d'Este, usually known as Mary of Modena. This was agreeable to Louis, if James would not have the Duchess of Guise; but Louise was disappointed.

A minor scheme of the Duchess of Portsmouth was a position in England for her younger sister, Henriette. She brought her to Court, got the King to settle £600 a year on her, and in a few months found a husband for her in Philip Herbert, seventh Earl of Pembroke, a man whose character belied his lineage. Aubrey says of him, very charitably, that he "espoused not learning, but was addicted to field sports and hospitality." He was also addicted to drink, and developed into a barbarous maniac. Even in the early days of her marriage Henriette wrote to her sister to complain about him. He amended his ways a little until the birth of a child to him. This, to his chagrin, was a daughter, and his conduct grew worse, until in 1678 he was twice in the Tower, once for blasphemy and once for murder.* Two years later he slew an officer of the watch at Turnham Green, when returning from some orgy. But he escaped the consequences, perhaps through the influence of his wife's sister. In 1683 he died as the result of drink—a happy release to all connected with him.

Of Lady Pembroke we know little except that she would have been as extravagant as her sister had she been able. She made a great display of mourning for the late-lamented Earl in 1683. In appearance she was, according to Ruvigny, who succeeded Colbert as French Ambassador in 1674, "not more than ordinarily attractive." But she secured a second husband, from the French nobility, when she left England.

The state of neutrality between the Duchesses of Ports-

* In my section on Titus Oates in *Liars and Fakers*, I have alluded to Mr. J. G. Muddiman's theory that Pembroke may have been the real murderer of Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey in the October of this year.

mouth and Cleveland continued in 1674, when each of them had £10,000 a year settled on them by the King. Both being quick spenders, no amount of money appeared enough for them. In particular, both gambled and lost heavily. We all know the story, of a later date, of Lady Cleveland playing at basset and being so reduced as to try, in vain, to borrow twenty guineas from the ungrateful Churchill.

In 1675 a dispute arose between the ladies. In the August of that year the King created little Charles Lennox Duke of Richmond and Lennox. As a consolation, in the following month he made Charles and Henry Fitzroy Dukes of Southampton and of Grafton. At once the ladies fell out over the question of the precedence of their sons. The Lord Treasurer Danby prudently chose to support the reigning mistress, and the question was settled as she wished it to be.

Lady Portsmouth could not complain at this time that she did not receive the attention of the courtiers. The populace of London might hate her, the ladies of the aristocracy might slight her, but the men were assiduous in their calls upon her in her Whitehall apartments. Behind her back they might ridicule her claims to relationship with all the noble families of France, and might complain of her ostentatious exhibition of her sway over the King. Outwardly they showed her the utmost deference. Even Arlington, who disliked her intensely, concealed his feelings. Danby, who had succeeded in bringing the Dutch war to an end in 1674, and was aiming at a break-up of the French paramountcy, kept in with her, as we have seen. The scandalmongers even accused her of too close intimacy with him.

In fact, she seemed to have little to fear for her future. Nell Gwynn, it is true, was rather a thorn in her flesh. Charles would not abandon his relations with the lively young actress, and the Duchess had to be content to share his love with Nell, as she shared his prodigal gifts with Lady Cleveland. She did not refuse to meet her, and even sat down to cards with her. She knew that Charles, if his wife should die, could never marry Nell Gwynn. But he might, she believed, marry her and legitimise their son, to be one day King of England.

The very last day of 1675 brought a threat of danger to her position which she had had no reason to anticipate. There arrived in London on December 31st a dashing young woman of thirty, black-haired and of brilliant complexion, clad in the costume of a cavalier, who came as a visitor to the Duke and Duchess of York.

This was Hortense Mancini, the third and loveliest of the five beautiful daughters of Cardinal Mazarin's sister, by the Italian nobleman, Lorenzo Mancini. Hortense was the Cardinal's favourite niece, had been left by his will a fortune of more than £1,500,000, and had married his principal heir, the Marquis de la Meilleraye, who took the title of the Duke of Mazarin. The marriage proved unhappy. The Duke was pious even to the point of madness. Evelyn says of Hortense that she was "an extraordinary beauty and wit, but dissolute and impatient of matrimonial restraint." Husband and wife separated, after she had borne him four children, and she set out to travel over the Continent, indulging in wild follies, and being fond of dressing, as she arrived in England, in men's clothes. The reason why she now went to the Yorks was

that she was a cousin* of Marie-Beatrice, who welcomed her with pleasure. What soon happened delighted a great number of people. The King, of course, who as a penniless exile abroad had in vain courted her when she was but thirteen, heard of Hortense's arrival, and soon paid his respects. He visited her not only at St. James's Palace; for on April 25th Charles Hatton writes to his brother the Viscount that "the Duchesse of Portsmouth is not well: her sicknesse, it is said, is encreased at somebody's visiting the Dutchesse Mazarine at my Lady Harvey's house." (Lady Harvey was a notorious go-between.) Then, in May, the Duke of York, having bought a new house in St. James's Park, gave it to his wife's cousin to live in as long as she continued in England.

Nell Gwynn mischievously put on mourning for the Duchess of Portsmouth, who had a miscarriage and went away to Bath. The Duchess of Cleveland at last betook herself to Paris, to the great relief of the King. She left behind her her daughter Anne, now, at the age of fifteen, Countess of Sussex, who, to her husband's great disgust, struck up a warm friendship with the new favourite, to which he could only put an end by packing her away to his estate at Hurstmonceaux. Anne, who had her mother's former apartments in Whitehall Palace, had been in the habit of receiving Charles and Madame Mazarin together in them.

Arlington and many others rejoiced at the idea that the Portsmouth supremacy was finished. And, indeed, it

---

* I have to thank Mrs. Andrew Lang for pointing out, in a letter to me, that I was in error in stating in *My Lady Castlemaine* that Madame Mazarin was aunt to Marie-Beatrice.

looked so. When Louise left Bath and went to Windsor, she found that no lodgings had been prepared for her. Back in London, she was treated coldly by the King, to whom her temporarily jaded looks made no appeal in contrast to Madame Mazarin's brilliance. The courtiers neglected her for the new star; and, in addition, she was in financial straits owing to the dishonesty of her steward, who had made away with £12,000.

Nevertheless, in spite of her reputation for weeping,* she did not lose heart. Charles began to visit her again frequently, though it was noticed that he called on her by day only, and never unaccompanied by someone else. The situation was truly singular. The new beauty seemed all in all at Court; but it was well known that Charles spent many nights with Nell Gwynn, whose son by him he created Earl of Burford at the end of 1676. And there was Louise, whose superiority of brain over either Charles was bound to recognise, while her good looks were returning. She had the tact, too, with the aid of the French Ambassador, to make peace with Madame Mazarin, instead of trying to fight her.

The political situation was no less strange than Charles's domestic one. Popular feeling against France was high. Danby, on whom Charles leant much, was still working to overthrow French influence. Madame Mazarin was anti-French now, because Louis XIV would not force her husband to increase his allowance to her. Charles himself was apparently hopelessly tied to France, Louis having paid him in February, 1676, two and a half million francs to

* The new French Ambassador, Courtin, speaks of torrents of tears when she "opened her heart" to him in August, 1676.

prorogue Parliament for fifteen months and so be able to prevent any action hostile to France. Danby would have stopped this, but Charles, as usual, wanted money, in fact wanted it more than ever with Madame Mazarin to keep, and signed a new treaty. Then he found that even the new subsidy was not enough. He pressed Louis for an increase, but found him unready to part with more.

Charles was desperate. He knew that the country was against the French alliance, and that if he summoned Parliament again, in spite of his bond with Louis he would have great difficulty in restraining it. But how else could he get supplies? He took the risk, allowed Parliament to meet in February, 1677, and, though Louis thoughtfully sent over bribes for members of the Government and the Opposition parties alike, was soon confronted with prayers from the Commons for war with France. He put these off by adjournments of Parliament.

The King's policy, in his distress, became very vacillating, and he agreed to a step which had a momentous influence on English history. His nephew, William, Prince of Orange, came over in September and asked for the hand of Mary, daughter of the Duke of York. Danby strongly urged acceptance of the offer, if indeed he did not engineer it. The idea was very popular, Charles and James gave their consent, and on November 4th the wedding took place, to the extreme disgust of Louis XIV. Worse, from the French point of view, was to follow; for less than three weeks later the English Government made a proposal for a joint peace with Holland. Louis declined, and cut off his supply of money to Charles, who retorted by saying he could no longer regard the Treaty of Dover as in force.

Parliament was summoned, and in January, 1678, England signed a separate treaty with Holland.

Strange to say, this did not lead to a further decline of Louise's influence with Charles, though the reason was non-political. She fell gravely ill, and at one time was thought likely to die. Charles, always tender-hearted in such circumstances (even with his wife) was constant in his attendance in the sick-room. When she recovered and was back at Court, Barillon, yet another new French Ambassador, was able to write that the King spoke to her of everything, and that she was able to insinuate what she wished. Danby, it appeared, was working with her, and the most influential courtiers were her friends. A remarkable restoration of her position!

Moreover, she was now on quite good terms with Madame Mazarin, by which they kept Charles to themselves, allowing him latitude in the matter of Nell Gwynn. That they could not prevent; but they managed to keep others out, and bled the King for money, much of which went on gambling debts, Madame Mazarin being as great an addict to card-play as the Duchesses of Portsmouth and Cleveland. Nor were they unlike in their extravagance over dress. Judged by fine feathers all three were fine birds.

Despite the renewal of her favour with Charles, which was aided by the fact that Madame Mazarin was a woman so avid of admiration from men that the King alone did not suffice her, Lady Portsmouth failed to persuade him to ratify a fresh French alliance, and a war seemed imminent. English troops were even sent to the Netherlands, though no fighting occurred. Charles coquetted with both France and Holland, finding Louis's bribes too small and his

terms too exacting, while the Dutch were suspicious of his good faith and ultimately made peace with France.

Troubles grew thick and fast for Charles. The Duchess of Cleveland, to whom he had expressed the wish that she should "live so as to make the least noise she could" in Paris, entirely disregarded his wish, intrigued, wrote long and troublesome letters to him, and fell out (not without some reason) with Montagu, the English Ambassador to France, causing him to abandon his post and return to England to join the Parliamentary Opposition. She tried also to obtain the King's consent for her to come back; but this at present he would not permit.

Then came the wicked "Popish Plot" agitation, which drove Roman Catholics to forget animosities among themselves, and made Lady Portsmouth and Madame Mazarin closer friends. Neither indeed was safe; and at the end of 1678 Louise seriously thought of retiring to France. She well knew how hated she was.

She stayed in England, however, and maintained her interest in politics. She was credited by some with a hand in the fall of Danby, who, early in 1679, saw a Bill of Attainder passed against him, surrendered himself, and was sent to the Tower. The mistress's relations with the Lord Treasurer were always ambiguous, and her influence was increased by his removal; for Charles relied so much on him and was now driven more than ever to seek her advice. But the main cause of Danby's downfall seems to have been the enmity of Ralph Montagu, whom he declined to aid in obtaining the Secretaryship of State. When Montagu came back from Paris to London and entered Parliament, Danby tried to get an order for the seizure of

his papers, which were compromising to several people over the dealings with France. But the papers were, instead, examined in Parliament, and articles of impeachment against Danby followed, with the result we have seen.

In the summer of 1679 the Duchess of Cleveland gained the King's permission to return to England for a brief while. Shortly after her arrival appeared those scurrilous verses which are quoted at the beginning of this chapter. They are attributed to John Sheffield, Earl of Mulgrave, in collaboration with Dryden. The King only laughed at them, but the ladies were considerably annoyed; and curiously the milder of the two showed her resentment the most. On the night of December 18th Dryden, while he was walking home through Rose Alley, Covent Garden, was waylaid and beaten by a gang of ruffians hired, it was said, by the Duchess of Portsmouth.

Her Grace was high in the King's councils now. Danby had gone, and with the most influential minister, the Earl of Sunderland, she was on excellent terms.* The Duke of Buckingham, who in 1674 had been driven out of public life by the scandal of his association with Lady Shrewsbury, and not without the Duchess of Cleveland's influence with the King, it was said, had returned to it, but was a member of the Opposition and never again held office. Louise and the French Ambassador carried on their negotiations with Paris for the King, secretly but unchecked. Charles's demands were high, four million francs a year for three years, but in return he promised to do all that Louis

* Lady Sunderland did not share in this friendship. In January, 1679, she wrote to Henry Sidney, describing the lady as "a damned jade," who "will certainly sell us, whenever she can, for £500."

wished, including the prorogation of Parliament, whose anti-French feelings were naturally not abated by the "No Popery" campaign.

This campaign affected both the Duchess-mistresses. Lady Cleveland not much, for she had returned to Paris, and it was only her husband whose life was in danger. But Castlemaine in June, 1680, defended himself so ably that he was acquitted of high treason against the lying charges of Oates and Dangerfield. As for Lady Portsmouth, though so many were known to desire her banishment, such tact did she exhibit that she made friends even with the Opposition, and at Lord Stafford's trial, six months after Castlemaine's, was seen sitting to watch proceedings, actually courted by members of the Whig Party, and distributing "sweetmeats and gracious looks" to them.

We are anticipating, however, the order of events. Charles had been forced to allow Parliament to assemble in January, 1680, but soon prorogued it till the autumn, when the great question became that of the succession to the throne. An illness of the King in May, though it was soon over, caused a scare lest something worse might happen without assurance as to the next occupant. There were many among those who wished to exclude the Duke of York who yet had nothing to say against his daughters, both members of the Church of England. The Earl of Shaftesbury (the former Lord Ashley) and of course Monmouth himself, urged the claims of "the Protestant Duke." The Duchess of Portsmouth took up a singular attitude. Romanist as she was, she allied herself with the Exclusionists, and favoured Monmouth's succession. There were two theories as to the reason of her conduct. One

was that she was afraid for her own safety if she opposed Exclusion; the other that she was put up to support Exclusion, to which it was known that the King would not consent, in order to check discussion of "limitations" (of James's future power) to which the King might agree. On the second theory, she was acting on James's side, for he certainly did not want limitations. "But this," say James's own *Memoirs*, "is too fine. She was hearty for the Exclusion." Yet he seemed to bear no long grudge against her.*

What we should have expected her to do was to urge the claims of her own son. Perhaps she did, in private with the King.

The House of Commons was obdurate, and on November 11th passed an Exclusion Bill. The Lords, swayed by the eloquence of Lord Halifax, threw it out; and Charles protected him from the wrath of the Commons.

Not all the Lords, however, were docile. Shaftesbury, with no gratitude for the support she had given to the Monmouth claims, spoke strongly in the House against the influence of the Duchess of Portsmouth at Court. There must be, "in plain English," he declared, a change. "We must have neither Popish wife, nor Popish mistress, nor Popish councillor at court, nor any new convert."

Charles waited to see whether the Commons would grant him supply, and when they coupled an agreement to do so with his consent to the Exclusion Bill, prorogued Parliament, following this up by a dissolution in January,

* According to Burnet, when Charles reconciled James to her (see p. 182) he said she had acted under his orders, so as to gain the confidence of Shaftesbury and his party and betray their designs to him. This may have been true.

1681. He announced that his next Parliament would meet at Oxford; and a General Election of a riotous character took place.

Negotiations for financial support from Louis were still continuing; but Barillon apparently continued to keep the Duchess out of them—or perhaps it was Charles's own wish if he thought she had gone too far in her support of Monmouth. She had, moreover, formed a friendship with the Prince of Orange, who, as Mary's husband, was another rival to James's succession to the throne. At any rate, though Charles showed no decline in his personal regard for her, he concluded his agreement with Louis without further assistance from her. The French King promised a very handsome subsidy for the next four years, and no longer demanded a declaration of Roman Catholicism from Charles. But a check on the mischievous activities of Parliament was asked for, and this Charles was fully prepared to give.

He went up to Oxford in March, 1681, accompanied by his courtiers and ladies, including the Duchess of Portsmouth and Nell Gwynn. He met the new Parliament, and, when the Commons showed their intention of bringing the Exclusion Bill forward again, promptly countered with a dissolution. He would have no more of Parliaments. He would no more consent to listen to demands for war with France, for the alteration of the succession, or for the banishment of his mistresses. Nor was there any real popular indignation aroused by his arbitrary step. The "Popish Plot" agitation had almost subsided, the more level-headed of the nation were aware of the artificial aid which Parliament had given it, and Charles still retained

the curious hold which he had on the affections of his subjects. An attempt to have Lord Shaftesbury punished for subornation of witnesses in connection with the "Plot" failed, the Middlesex Grand Jury being still very anti-Papist. But Shaftesbury's influence was declining, and next year, after compromising himself in disloyal plots, he fled to Holland, where he soon died.

In the autumn of 1681 Lady Portsmouth was taken by the King to Newmarket for the races, with the inevitable Nell as companion; and two months later she had the satisfaction of seeing her son appointed Master of the Horse in place of the Duke of Monmouth—an unpopular step, but one which nobody could dispute the King's right to take.

Louise's place in Charles's affections was secure, the Mazarin threat having lost its danger. But financially she was much embarrassed. The royal bounty to her was insufficient to cope with her vast extravagance, and Charles's failing health—he had been seriously ill earlier in 1681—alarmed her. What had she to look forward to if he should die? She urged him to settle enough upon her to secure her from the risk of poverty, and when she got to know of the arrangements of the latest secret treaty with France, in which, as we have heard, her agency had been dispensed with, she persuaded Charles to allot to her £10,000 out of each French quarterly payment to him. Thus fortified, she felt herself safe in carrying out an intention which she had long cherished of visiting France. Among other motives prompting her to this was to see whether she could not get Louis XIV to grant her the privilege of the *tabouret*, the stool on which the noblest

French ladies were allowed to sit in the presence of the Queen. She had the ducal fief of Aubigny already, but she had not yet the title of " Duchesse d'Aubigny," and the gift of the *tabouret* would be a special concession.

Bidding farewell to Charles in March, 1682, and taking with her her sister Henriette, she set out for France. Her visit was a great triumph for her, of which she did not fail to send Charles glowing accounts. She was received with much honour at Versailles, and Louis granted her the privilege for which she asked. He did not, until two years later, make her Duchesse d'Aubigny ; but he gave her the coveted *tabouret* now. Well content, she went with Henriette to take the waters at Bourbonne, and then returned through Paris to London, which she reached in July.

In her absence, the Duchess of Cleveland had arrived in England, having at last received Charles's permission to settle down there again. She had, apparently, been more mindful of late of his request to make " the least noise she could," and she wanted to do something for her son George, who was not yet like his two brothers a duke, but merely Earl of Northumberland. Her wish was gratified within a year, and he was created Duke of Northumberland. But otherwise her influence at Court was slight, and she was little seen. She threatened no danger to the other Duchess's position. Charles welcomed Lady Portsmouth back with joy, and the triumph of her French visit had evidently strengthened her much. She even, through the medium of the King, became reconciled to the Duke of York, which was a wise step in view of his possibly soon approaching succession to the throne. So successful

was the reconciliation that James is said to have asked her opinion whether Prince George of Denmark would be a suitable husband for his daughter Anne.

Undoubtedly the former Louise de Kéroualle was one of the rulers of England from now onwards. The Duke of York and the King's most trusted minister, Lawrence Hyde, Earl of Rochester, son of old Clarendon, worked hand in glove with her. But she took the chief credit to herself for a new deal with France, by which Charles received £80,000 from Louis for letting him, without protest from England, over-run Luxembourg. Barillon was no longer able to dispense with her aid.

It is strange that she ran the risk of compromising her favour with Charles, if only by indiscretion, not infidelity. In 1683 there came on a visit to England the handsome young Philippe de Vendôme, a nephew of Madame Mazarin, and bearer of the title of Grand Prior of France. He naturally called upon the royal mistress in her sumptuous apartments in Whitehall, described as much finer than the Queen's. She received him well, and soon scandal began to accuse her of too much regard for him. Charles became suspicious and sulky, and sent a request to him to cease his acquaintance with the lady. The Grand Prior kept away for a few days, and then began again to call upon her. It was not without a hard struggle that he was persuaded to leave England. Charles was observed to kiss Lady Portsmouth in public after he had left—for the first time, it is said. The episode of the Grand Prior seemed only to have increased his affection, which the Duchess's enemies had hoped it would have turned from her.

In this same year the Duchess of Portsmouth lost—if that

is the right word—her brother-in-law, the Earl of Pembroke. The Countess went to France, leaving her daughter Charlotte, who was made a ward in Chancery, in the care of her sister, who was always very fond of her niece.*

The next year, 1684, saw Her Grace of Portsmouth in secure possession of the ailing King's heart. There was still Nell Gwynn, whose son by him he now created Duke of St. Albans; but neither she nor Madame Mazarin had more than a sensual appeal to him. As for the Duchess of Cleveland, she had relapsed into her old bad ways, and was carrying on an intrigue with a rascally actor, Cardonell Goodman. Charles paid off some heavy back debts of hers, and saw her at Court. But he certainly had no remains of love for her. For Lady Portsmouth, on the other hand, his love was sincere. When she fell ill in November, he could hardly be persuaded to leave the sick-room until she had recovered, when he was most openly demonstrative of his feelings towards her.

Charles need not have feared for her life, which had fifty more years to run. His own had less than three months. Yet his death came as a great shock to the Court and to the nation at large. He was only in his fifty-fifth year, and, though there were suspicious signs in his apathy towards affairs of State and his weariness at night, he continued his daily gaiety to the very end. It is unnecessary to quote again Evelyn's well-known picture of the Court on January 25th, 1685, with the "King sitting and toying with his concubines, Portsmouth, Cleaveland, and Mazarine, etc." Just a week later Charles did not feel well. He

* Mrs. Colquhoun Grant (*Brittany to Whitehall*) mentions having in her possession a marquetry chest, a gift from the Duchess of Portsmouth to Charlotte.

Hortense Mancini, Duchess of Mazarin.
From a painting by Pierre Mignard.

came to Lady Portsmouth's apartments for "spoonmeat," and the next morning, while he was dressing, he had a fit, gave a scream, and fell into his chair. Death was at hand, though it did not arrive until 11.30 a.m. on February 6th.

It is not correct to say, as is sometimes said on Burnet's authority, that the Duchess of Portsmouth hung over the death-bed with the familiarity of a wife.* She showed her solicitude otherwise, however. On February 4th she sent for Barillon; and the French Ambassador wrote home of her evident marks of profound grief. She told him that she had a great secret to tell him. The King, though at present surrounded by English prelates, was at heart a Catholic. She could not decently enter the room, as the Queen was there most of the time (this is confirmed by Thomas Bruce, afterwards Earl of Ailesbury); and the Duke of York was occupied with his own affairs. She begged Barillon to approach the Duke. "Go and tell him I have implored you to warn him to consider what can be done to save his brother's soul."

James, as we know, introduced Father John Huddleston, a Benedictine priest who had assisted Charles in his escape after the battle of Worcester,† and who now received him into the Church of Rome.

All his natural sons, the young Dukes, with the exception of Monmouth, who was in disgrace in Holland, visited the King on his death-bed. James, of course, for all his

---

* Macaulay erroneously follows Burnet, as Mr. H. Noel Williams, in his *Rival Sultanas*, points out.

† Note what Titus Oates said in the fiftieth of his famous Eighty-one Articles, that the saving of Charles in the flight from Worcester was described to him by the prior and sub-prior of the Benedictines in England as "the worst day's work that ever simple Jack Huddlestone did in all his life."

preoccupation with the affairs of his succession, was present to the end. He received his brother's dying wishes. Among these were the commendation of his mistresses and their sons to James's care. Evelyn makes him ask James to " be kind to the Dutchesse of Cleaveland, and especially Portsmouth, and that Nelly might not starve." Other accounts leave out the Duchess of Cleveland. According to Burnet, Charles " recommended Lady Portsmouth over and over again," and said he had always loved her and loved her now to the last. " Let not poor Nelly starve," he concluded.

The new King did not neglect his brother's wishes. He called on Lady Portsmouth very soon after Charles's death, and assured her that he would protect her. He paid over to her £12,000, which seems to have been the remaining sum due to her of the £100,000 promised by Charles, and gave her also a pension of £3,000 a year for herself and £2,000 a year for her son, whom, however, he felt compelled to deprive of his Mastership of the Horse. In compensation she asked that her £3,000 should be transferred to the boy.

Lady Cleveland remained in England, as did Madame Mazarin. But Lady Portsmouth went to France, taking with her all her money, plate, jewelry and furniture, and was now a very rich woman. She was not yet thirty-six and was still beautiful. (Voltaire, indeed, describes her as still lovely and unfaded at seventy.) She had no mind to live a quiet life, and was credited by her enemies with many lovers. She certainly spent her money freely, and as her son grew up she found his constant calls on her purse very heavy. She was, however, always generous to him. He

married Lady Anne Brudenel, who had several children by him, but led a dissipated life and predeceased his mother by eleven years. He had accepted the Revolution, left the Roman Church, and lived in England.

She took a great interest in her niece, Charlotte Herbert, and secured as a husband for her John Jeffreys, son of the Lord Chief Justice, who was a close friend of hers.

She paid a visit to England in James's reign, and perhaps another when William of Orange was on the throne. With the Revolution, of course, her money from England was cut off, and William had forbidden her to come over. But George I raised no objection, and she is reported to have been well received at his Court in 1715, though we do not know why this should have been so.

This was her last known visit to England. The position of her fortunes had become bad, and she had to beg the protection of the French Crown against her creditors, and to take refuge in the country to save the expense of Paris. In 1718 St. Simon describes her as old, embarrassed in her affairs, and very converted and penitent.

In 1723 she lost her son, in 1725 her sister, who had by her second marriage become Marquise de Thois. She lived alone in the country, doing good deeds, founding a convent on her estate of Aubigny, and giving money to churches. On November 14th, 1734, she died in Paris, which she had visited to consult the doctors.

The Duchess of Portsmouth passed away in the odour of sanctity. The same cannot be said of the Duchess of Cleveland, the finish of whose story, though she died before the other, we have left till now. It may be told briefly, for no longer had the lady any opportunity of exercising

domination over anyone of account. James merely tolerated her continued presence in England, while her much injured husband was high in his favour and was sent on an extraordinary mission to the Pope at Rome. Mentions of her name in the period between Charles's death and the Revolution are very rare. Scandal attributed to her in 1686 a son of whom the father was Cardonell Goodman; but there is no confirmation of this. Two years later we hear of her going down the Thames on board an East Indiaman, in the company of Madame Mazarin and her sister, the Duchess of Bouillon (Marie-Anne Mancini), when the ladies were "so well satisfied with their fare and entertainment that they stayed two or three days."*

Lady Cleveland was still in England after the Revolution, making desperate efforts to have her pension continued. She was for long unsuccessful, and was much harassed by debt. She was compelled to go from Cleveland House to a new and humbler home in Arlington Street. Here, and in the houses of her friends, she gambled heavily and without luck. Her amorous intrigues went on, and her violence of temper was unabated.

At last, in 1697, she managed to persuade William to take compassion on her miserable state of debt, and an order was given for the payment to her of £2,350 in twenty-four weekly instalments. By this she was enabled the better to carry on the life of such gaiety as appealed to her.

In 1705 came the fantastic episode of her "marriage" with Beau Feilding, when he had already a wife whom he

* Letter of an unknown correspondent to John Ellis, July 31st, 1688.

had married only sixteen days before.* Both marriages, as may be imagined, were privately performed. But the facts came out, and the Beau was tried for bigamy and convicted, "the most noble lady, Barbara, Duchess of Cleveland," being pronounced to have "the liberty and freedom of marrying with any other person." She was now in her sixty-sixth year, and made no use of this permission. Instead, she retired to what was then the peaceful village of Chiswick, where she passed the last two years of her life, having in her charge the boy Charles Hamilton, illegitimate son of her daughter Barbara, by James Douglas, Earl of Arran.

In 1709 she "fell ill of a dropsie, which swelled her gradually to a monstrous bulk," as Boyer relates, "and in about three months' time put a period to her life." Of her state of mind as she was dying we have the account of her contemporary, the Abbé Rizzini, who had been Modenese representative in Paris:

"It was almost impossible to inspire her with Christian sentiments for the dread passage to the other life. The course of her life and her lamentable end are a great example of the vanity of earthly opulence and greatness; a lady of noble lineage, of famous beauty, allied to the great houses in Europe, and of royal blood, with a dowry of fourteen million francs, obliged to live in exile in the vile commerce of cards and to die destitute of divine and human aid."

It was on October 9th that she died, and she was buried in Chiswick parish church four days later, the pall-bearers, according to Boyer, being the Dukes of Ormonde

* This is related at full length in *My Lady Castlemaine*, Chapter XV. We may note that Lord Castlemaine had died in July, 1705, so that there was nothing to prevent his wife's remarriage in the following November.

and Hamilton, the Earls of Essex, Grantham, and Lisford (really Lifford), and Lord Berkeley of Stratton. It was presumably the influence of her grandson, Charles, second Duke of Grafton, which secured this noble array of pall-bearers, for it was he who made the funeral arrangements.

. . . . .

There is a strong outward similarity in the careers of the Duchesses of Cleveland and Portsmouth. Both very well born, both beautiful, both mistresses of Charles II and recipients of huge sums of money from him, both enormously extravagant, especially over dress and gambling, both lived to be old and to die in retirement in the country. But the differences in their natures leave us in no doubt as to which was the more comfortable companion. Louise might " affect to weep," might " sell " her lover ; Barbara's tantrums must have been far worse to endure.

We may come back to the point whether the two may fairly be regarded as types of Dominant Women. We have seen enough of them now to recognise that they were of this class, if not so typical of it as other women in this book. They never had the opportunity of supreme rule over a people, and do not seem capable of using the opportunity could it have come their way. But they were masterful, and could bend men to their will. Louise could even mould the policy of a country, against the wishes of the majority of its inhabitants. It required, no doubt, the contact with a king like Charles II, so hopelessly infatuated with female beauty and so patient of female meddling with his affairs, to give them scope. Scope they assuredly managed to get. But too many of their kind would be subversive of historical balance.

CHAPTER VIII

"DUCHESS SARAH"

SELDOM has a beautiful woman been so heartily abused—and, it may be said, so genuinely hated—as Sarah Jennings, afterwards first Duchess of Marlborough.

Her story combined two plots of unusual interest; one a tale of struggle for political power, in which three women were the leading characters, and the other a love romance extending over forty-six years. Her connection with the political struggle brought on her the hatred which so many felt for her.

That Sarah Jennings would attain such prominence as was actually hers in English history was in no way indicated by her origin. She was the last-born of nine children of a poor Cavalier family at St. Albans; her father, at one time M.P. for that place, ruined by the Civil War and encumbered by debts to the end of his life; her mother, according to the portrait of her by Kneller, which hangs in Earl Spencer's collection at Althorpe, a rather sinister-looking dame, and, if her enemies can be believed, equally sinister in character.

Lack of money pursued the family after the Restoration, and almost its only asset was the golden-haired beauty of two of the girls, Frances and, her junior by eleven years, Sarah. Richard Jennings was rewarded for his loyalty, and slightly relieved in his poverty, by the appointment of

Frances as a maid of honour to the Duchess of York. Her lively character, and yet her ability to protect herself in a Court full of dangers for girls with any claim to good looks, are manifested in the memoirs of the day.

Frances Jennings married George Hamilton, brother of the real author of one of the best known of those memoirs, and in 1668 accompanied him to France. Mrs. Jennings was very soon after left a widow, without money, and to help her Sarah followed in her sister's footsteps and went as maid of honour to the Duchess of York. She was not yet twelve, and her mother, whose favourite she was, showed more anxiety for her than she had shown for Frances. She came to town to watch over her. Then two scandals about maids of honour threw her in a panic, and she tried to take Sarah away from Court.

The girl was sixteen when we first hear of the flaring up of her later only too notorious temper. She went to her mistress, the second Duchess, to whose household she had passed from that of the first, and told her that if her mother were not put out of the lodgings which she occupied in St. James's she herself would run away. (She says her mother is a mad woman, records a contemporary letter.) Sarah won; for it was Mrs. Jennings who left.

The daughter had her special reason for wrath at her mother's interference. She had met and fallen in love with handsome John Churchill, who, after leaving St. Paul's School, had been first page to the Duke of York and then ensign in the Guards. He had seen some service on the Continent and was now on his way to a colonelcy.

Aged twenty-six, young Churchill had sown his wild oats, and not at all creditably, according to the stories of the

day. He had indeed, some years back, made the acquaintance of the notorious Duchess of Cleveland, and through a gift from her of £5,000 laid the foundation of his subsequent great fortune. He had got over this affair (of which the supposed issue was a daughter, Barbara "Palmer," born in 1672) and was genuinely attracted by Sarah Jennings.

The Churchill family, however, had other ideas for him than the penniless maid of honour. They pressed him to marry the wealthy Catherine Sedley, afterwards Countess of Dorchester and mistress of James II. He half consented, with the result that Sarah's wrath broke forth again. She swore that she would never see him any more, in private or in public, if she could help it. "You have been the falsest thing on earth to me," she wrote passionately. "I give God thanks, though too late I see my error."

The allusion to seeing him in private recalls that maids of honour were not forbidden to receive gentlemen in their bedrooms; and according to Bolinbroke Churchill was allowed the task of tying or untying Sarah's garters. But the Garter motto applies: *Honi soit qui mal y pense.* It is not suggested that he was permitted further liberties.

Sarah's will prevailed. Churchill did not marry the heiress, but instead pleaded for forgiveness. The maid of honour forgave, and about her eighteenth birthday married him, the young Duchess of York being in the secret and abetting the match.

In the York household Sarah had met the other great influence on her career, the Princess Anne, younger daughter of James and his first Duchess. Only five years older than the Princess, Sarah had been a playmate of hers,

and her vivacious self-reliance made an impression on the weak and clinging Anne which lasted more than thirty years—until at last Anne's latent obstinacy was forced to rebel.

Between 1679 and 1690 Sarah Churchill bore her husband seven* children, so that obviously she could not always be in attendance at Court. But so much did she manage to bring the Princess under her spell that when at eighteen Anne married Prince George of Denmark she begged for her to be made a lady of her bedchamber. The spell increased. Like her sister Mary, Anne was of the type which must always have a female friend to adore and address in extravagant terms. The very thought of ceremony between her and her "dearest dear" was distasteful to her. So from her came the first idea of the celebrated pact whereby they became to each other simply "Mrs. Morley" and "Mrs. Freeman." "Let Sarah choose," said Anne. "My frank open temper," wrote Sarah many years later, "naturally led me to pitch upon Freeman." And Freeman she certainly remained for a very long time to come.

Anne was eager to bestow material advantages also on her favourite. When James II began his short reign in February, 1685, his daughter asked permission to have her as first lady of her bedchamber. James consented. Their difference in faith (for the Churchills were, like Anne, staunchly Church of England) did not make him look upon either husband or wife as other than friends. He had had much of their society, both in Holland and in Scotland, when his own absence from England had been forced upon

* Or possibly eight. Only five, a son and four daughters, survived infancy.

Sarah Jennings, Duchess of Marlborough.
From an engraving after a painting by Kneller.

him in his brother's reign. On his accession he made Churchill a Gentleman of the Bedchamber and Baron Churchill of Sandridge.

Difference of faith, however, was to tell its tale. Certainly attempts seem to have been made to win over the Churchills to Rome. Sarah's sister Frances had early become a Roman Catholic, and she had taken as her second husband Richard Talbot, now Earl of Tyrconnel, a most fervent propagandist. The Tyrconnels urged on the Churchills the advantages of sharing the King's religion; but in vain. Neither they nor Anne were open to conversion. On the contrary, religion decided them to change their allegiance.

When the crash came, towards the end of 1688, Lord Churchill had just been appointed Lieutenant-General. In little over a fortnight he left his post to join William of Orange and his invading forces at Axminster, with "a dignified letter about his conscience and religion," addressed to James. He must have given his wife previous warning, for, before the King's order to confine her in her brother-in-law's lodging at St. James's could be carried out, Sarah, in the early morning of November 26th, had slipped away, taking with her the Princess Anne, in a coach which she had waiting for them at the Cockpit Steps.

Churchill had his reward, before William's coronation, in an earldom and a privy councillorship. Sarah, now Countess of Marlborough, consolidated her position with her mistress; and, when Anne, partly through her persistent exertions on her behalf, had £50,000 a year settled on her by Parliament, Sarah received £1,000 a year in token of her gratitude.

All seemed to be going well for the Marlboroughs, when in 1691 a sudden break came in their fortunes. For this he, rather than she, was responsible. The growing unpopularity of William seems to have inspired the Earl with the idea that it might be as well to guard against the possibility of a Jacobite restoration finding him left out in the cold. It is hard to fathom the sincerity of Marlborough's approaches to the exiled king; but approaches were made, and they were discovered. It was also discovered that Anne had written to her father in a penitent strain. Could this have been done without Sarah's connivance? That is not known.

Anyhow, at the beginning of 1692, Marlborough was disgraced, stripped of his posts, and spent a month in the Tower. Mary asked her sister to dismiss Sarah. This Anne refused to do, and left Court rather than comply. It was not until Mary's death, over two years later, that William was reconciled with his sister-in-law, who after all was to be his successor; and in a few months more he received Marlborough into his good graces again.

But it was March, 1702, which set husband and wife on the path to fresh advancement. William was dead, and Anne, who had bestowed handsome marriage portions of £5,000 each on two of their daughters, wives of Lords Godolphin and Spencer, hastened to show her esteem for the parents. The Earl received from her the Garter and the Captain-Generalship of the Forces; his wife the Rangership of Windsor Park, worth another £1,500 a year to one who was already getting £6,000 from her various offices in the royal household.

Sarah was at the height of her influence, and had now

the opportunity of showing her genius for political life. It required genius, too. Queen Anne's sympathies were Tory, and in her coalition ministry the Tories had a majority of offices. Marlborough was not himself a party man, but Sarah was decidedly inclined to the Whigs. One section of the Tories was for ending the war which Marlborough had gone out to prosecute. He had to rely on her, therefore, to see that the anti-war party did not prevail during his absence—which, with her domination over the Queen, she successfully did.

Before the end of the year Marlborough returned, fresh from a successful campaign in the Netherlands, and was offered a dukedom. This would cost more than an earldom to maintain, Sarah pointed out, and gained her point; for Anne made a grant of £5,000 a year as long as she should live. Marlborough went back to the Continent, and Blenheim brought him further fame, and from the grateful Anne the gift of the Woodstock estate, coupled with an order to construct upon it Blenheim Palace—itself destined to be the scene of a battle with a Marlborough in command of one side!

The new Duke also became a Prince—of Mindelheim, in Bavaria—the Emperor Leopold bestowing this honour upon him, with a grant of £2,000 a year.

Glory seemed the Marlboroughs' secure possession. But insidiously the position was changing. Neither "Freeman," "Morley," nor the world they lived in, could remain the same. The Duchess, with her husband again abroad for the war, the last of their four surviving daughters now married, and their only son, Charles, Marquis of Blandford, cut off by smallpox at Cambridge

in 1703, was a lonely woman. The Queen had the constant deaths of her children, in tender years, to deplore, and was likewise lonely. This fact, however, did not bring the two women closer together, but rather began to drive them apart. Neither was exactly to be blamed. The difference in their temperaments, which had been the first source of attraction, could not stand the test of so many years. Sarah, witty, vivacious, exacting, had grown bored with a mistress of whom it has justly been said that she was "Good Queen Anne" for her negative, not her positive, qualities. Anne was dull, devoid of the artistic nature of the Stuarts, a poor conversationalist. At the same time she was a great talker, about herself, her ailments, her likes and dislikes.

The Duchess, in desperation, absented herself from Court, sometimes for weeks, leaving Anne to look for another upon whom to lean. Poor feeble George of Denmark (King James's "Little *Est-il possible?*") was no real prop to her; and, besides, it was to a woman that she naturally turned.

Curiously, Anne found the woman in a relative of the Duchess, Abigail, elder daugher of one Francis Hill, described as a Levant merchant, and of Mary, one of the many children of Sarah's grandfather, Sir John Jennings. Francis Hill lost his money and left his family destitute. Abigail went into service with a Lady Rivers, in Kent, until the Duchess, taking compassion on her, brought her to St. Albans, to live with her and her children, and, as she afterwards wrote, "treated her with as great kindness as if she had been my sister." She also spoke of "that woman I took out of a garret"—which was Sarah's way,

for she declared that she had raised her own family out of the dirt.

Undoubtedly, however, Sarah did befriend Abigail Hilll, whose appointment as woman of the bedchamber to Queen Anne can only have been due to her. A younger sister also got a like post, after having been previously laundress to Anne's little son, the Duke of Gloucester, who died before her accession.

The Queen had barely noticed Abigail until Sarah began to stay away from Court. Then she gradually discovered in her the prop she needed; and the empire of "Mrs. Freeman" was doomed.

Abigail Hill, according to Swift, was "a person of a plain, sound understanding, of great truth and sincerity, without the least mixture of falsehood or disguise; of an honest boldness and courage superior to her sex, firm and disinterested in her friendship, and full of love, duty and veneration for the Queen, her mistress." Swift was a Tory; and the Whigs had far other things to say about the lady, who was not of their party. They mocked at her plain looks and large red nose, which apparently cannot be denied. They also made her out to be a snake in the grass, who surreptitiously gained the Queen's confidence and led her astray.

The Duchess of Marlborough did not find out for some time what progress her insignificant cousin was making in the position she had procured for her. Suddenly, one day in the summer of 1707, there came to her the ominous report that Abigail had married a groom of the bedchamber to Prince George, and that the Queen had been present at the wedding!

She went off at once to express, first to her cousin and then to the Queen, her extreme indignation at having been kept in the dark. Anne, however, protested that she had "a hundred times bid Masham tell you, and she would not." She remonstrated in turn with her dear Freeman on her strange, hard thoughts about her Morley.

The man whom Abigail Hill had married was Samuel Masham, youngest son of a baronet, who had been in Prince George's service in various capacities, and by his obsequiousness was making his way to higher honours. It was not he, but his wife, that Sarah had to fear.

But a woman of the Duchess's ability was not to be defeated by the unaided efforts of one who was, after all, no more than a mediocrity. Mrs. Masham had a cousin on the other side of her family, Robert Harley, a man of more brains than scruples, who at the age of thirty-three had worked up to the Privy Council and a Secretaryship of State. An ex-Whig, he was now a Tory, like Mrs. Masham —and the Queen—and he set himself to undermine the Marlborough influence and bring the war with France to an end.

With the help of his cousin Harley had private access to the Queen, and instilled into her distrust of all that was Whig. The struggle was furious and uncertain. Harley was dismissed from office early in 1708; but in October, 1708, Prince George, who had been a supporter of the Marlboroughs, died, and Anne listened again to Harley. Sarah's conduct throughout was utterly lacking in tact. She either refused to visit Anne or, when she did, regaled her with denunciations of Mrs. Masham. Once Anne wrote personally to Marlborough, complaining of his

wife's "cold, unkind way," and begging him "never to forsake Mrs. Morley."

The Duke, unable to leave the war, could only remonstrate with his wife by letter; and Sarah took no heed. She continued to hector Anne about Mrs. Masham, "that base woman, and the creatures that govern her." The Queen gave up in disgust her efforts to effect a reconciliation, ceased to write to Marlborough, and even failed to send him a letter of congratulation on his victory at Malplaquet in September, 1709; following this up by refusing his request to be appointed Captain-General for life.

In alarm Marlborough desired his wife to write no more letters to the Queen, since they were both obviously out of her favour. He paid a short visit to England, during which we know nothing of what conversations he had with Sarah. But he did not succeed in mending matters; and Sarah, who was being bitterly attacked by the Tory pamphleteers for her conduct towards the Queen, resolved to put it to the touch.

It was now April, 1710. Sarah wrote asking for an audience. Anne replied telling her to write what she wanted. No, retorted Sarah, she was not prepared to put in writing what she had to say. It concerned certain slanders that were about concerning her; and her statement, she assured Anne, was not of a kind which would compel an answer.

She proceeded to drive to Kensington Palace, where the Queen was staying, and to wait until she should be received in audience. Anne left her to wait until evening, and then admitted her to her presence. The haughty Duchess had lost her haughtiness. Several times she begged to be

allowed to know how she had offended. Anne would only repeat: "Whatever you have to say you may put in writing." Still the other pleaded to be informed of her offence. "You told me in your letter," said the Queen, "that I shall not be compelled to answer."

Anne went to the door of the audience-room, with the remark: "You desired no answer, and you shall have none." Sarah burst into tears, but without avail. "You desired no answer, and you shall have none."

Sarah had indeed been mild, for her; but now, she admits in her account of the scene, she lost her temper and cried: "Your Majesty will suffer for such an instance of inhumanity." "That will be to myself," replied Anne, rather cryptically, and closed the audience. So were thirty years of service ended. The two never met again. Anne wrote to ask for her letters back; but the request was ignored.

Worse was to come. Marlborough's friends in the Ministry gave place to his enemies. The Duchess sent a letter of remonstrance (in which she did not omit to put some abuse of Mrs. Masham); but now it was Anne's turn to ignore. Soon after she took advantage of a general election to put an all Tory Ministry in power, which could only mean ruin to the Marlboroughs. When the Duke returned to England he was coldly received by the Queen. He brought a last letter from his wife, this time written in a humble strain. Anne would not open it at first, and, when she did at length read it, remarked that she could not change her mind. Moreover, she asked that the Duchess would return in three days' time the golden key which she had had as Mistress of the Robes.

Let her be given ten days, pleaded the Duke. No, said Anne, two days would be enough.

Marlborough took the message home, declaring to his wife that he would resign. She would not hear of this. He could take the key that very night, she said, which he did.

Sarah's political reign was finished for ever. She made no attempt to return, either before or after Anne's death, though she never lost her interest in politics. Her husband's fall followed quick on hers. He made his last military campaign in 1711, coming back to England to be dismissed from all his posts. They decided to live abroad, he going first and she staying to wind up their affairs, which he was content to leave in her able hands. Her enemies accused her of doing malicious damage to her rooms in St. James's Palace before leaving them. But she replied that she had only taken away her own property.

On August 1st, 1714, the Marlboroughs were back in England; whether by coincidence or by design, on the day of Queen Anne's death, it is uncertain. The Duke had been sounded by Jacobite agents on the Continent, but the religious views of himself and his wife made them upholders of the Protestant Succession. It has been surmised that some of the bitterness of the estrangement between Anne and Sarah was due to the fact that, as the Queen grew older, she more and more repented of her treatment of her father in 1688 and her attitude (in which she had almost certainly been encouraged by the then Lady Churchill) towards the birth of her half-brother, Prince James Francis Edward.

The Duke of Marlborough had taken care to ingratiate

himself with the Elector of Hanover, a policy of which his wife fully approved, so that under the new king they were assured of a welcome in England again.

The Duke had eight more years of life to run, the Duchess thirty. While he lived, the years were fairly peaceful. After his death, it was as if a curb were removed, and Sarah gave herself up to a series of quarrels, some of them very fierce, in which her vigorous tongue and pen exercised themselves without restraint. She quarrelled with her two surviving daughters, with her son-in-law, Lord Sunderland (though this was because he married again), with her grand-daughters. She quarrelled with her architect, Sir John Vanbrugh, about the building of Blenheim Palace, and went so far as to forbid him go near it. She had two quarrels with the Duke of St. Albans, one being about her right to cross through St. James's Park.

But her bitterest disputes were with public men and with pamphleteers, male and female, on political subjects. She detested Sir Robert Walpole and let him know it.* Her chief contribution to political writing was *The Duchess of Marlborough's Account of her Conduct from her first Coming to Court till the year* 1710. This she first prepared, before her husband's fall, in 1711, but is said to have held up on the advice of Bishop Burnet. Thirty years later, having got the help of Nathaniel Hooke in rewriting it, she gave it to the world and aroused a storm of controversy.

Sarah was then eighty-one, with the fighting spirit

* On the other hand, quite naturally, she admired William Pitt, to whom she left a legacy "on account of his merit in the noble defence he has made for the support of the laws of England and to prevent the ruin of his country."

obviously well preserved in her. She died, probably at Marlborough House, on October 14th, 1744, one of her last acts being to arrange for the suppression of Pope's *Ethic Epistles*, later known as *Moral Essays*, because she learnt that Pope (with whom, in spite of his Toryism, she had been friendly, and to whom she had given as much as £1,000 for some service he had rendered her) had aimed at her in his character of "Atossa." Pope had died before her, but she could not leave him the last word while she still breathed.

It must be admitted that she had reasonable ground for offence with the man who could write of her as one

> "Who with herself or others from her birth
> Finds all her life one warfare upon earth,"

and could say,

> "From loveless youth to unrespected age,
> No passion gratified except her rage. . . .
> Offend her, and she knows not to forgive;
> Oblige her, and she'll hate you while you live.
> But die, and she'll adore you. . . .
> Sick of herself through very selfishness!
> Atossa, curs'd with ev'ry granted prayer,
> Childless with all her children, wants an heir.
> To heirs unknown descends th' unguarded store,
> Or wanders, Heav'n-directed, to the poor."*

* There is only one known copy of this edition of the *Ethic Epistles*, which is in the British Museum, being a presentation copy which somehow escaped when the other presentation copies were recalled and the edition destroyed. But in 1746 W. Webb, "near St. Paul's," reprinted the lines in which Atossa's character appears, with the title "Verses upon the late D——ss of M——. By Mr. P——" and a note at the end:

"These verses are part of a poem entitled *Characters of Women*. It is generally said the D——ss gave Mr. P. 1,000 l. to suppress them. He took the money, yet the World sees the Verses; but this is not the first instance where Mr. P.'s practical virtue has fallen very short of those Pompous Professions of it he makes in his Writings."

It is curious, in a woman of such fiery disposition, that in her long life with her husband we hear of no serious disagreement between him and her. Marlborough, of course, would not have told. There is, indeed, one story, related by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, of her losing her temper with him and, to spite him, cutting off the long golden hair he so much admired. The tresses disappeared. After his death she found them treasured in a cabinet—and wept. In her turn, she kept two packets of letters from him to her, which she confessed she had not the heart to destroy. It is very rarely that we have an example of her thus softening.

Marlborough, by his letters, is shown as a romantic lover. But it was she who, when left a widow, made the romantic answer to a proposal of marriage from Charles Seymour, sixth Duke of Somerset—known as "the proud Duke"—that not the Emperor of the World could succeed in a heart devoted to John, Duke of Marlborough!

In one particular respect the pair of them were well matched, according to their bitterest enemies, of whom they both had plenty in those bitter days. Their leading vice matched, that of avarice.* It is certainly true that they both amassed money. He started early, as we have heard; was at one time drawing over £50,000 a year out of public funds; and left her a jointure of £15,000 a year, together with the right to spend £50,000 to complete Blenheim

* I quoted in my *Little Jennings and Fighting Dick Talbot*, the life of Sarah's sister and her brother-in-law, the mock-epitaph by a Jacobite on Bishop Burnet, who "loved gold like any layman." It concludes:

"If such a soul to Heaven is stole
And 'scaped old Satan's clutches,
We may presume there will be room
For Marlborough and his Duchess."

Palace within five years of his death. She left a fortune of £60,000 a year, her business acumen lasting to her old age, when she was buying land as the safest investment in those bad days.

Clearly there was something in Sarah Jennings which suited, and was required by, her husband. He could not, for all his military genius, have held his post without her What did she owe to him? We do not know from her. She could be very outspoken, as many knew to their cost. But she had her reticences. She did not say what made "John, Duke of Marlborough" the man of men to her.

CHAPTER IX

WOMAN-RULE IN RUSSIA

It was a strange streak in Russian history which showed itself in the eighteenth century: that of rule by women over a people, or collection of peoples, little better than barbarian. It is not that woman-rule is strange, in isolated instances, among barbarous races. We have in the first chapter of this book seen several examples. But the remarkable phenomenon now before us is that between 1725, when Catherine I stepped up to the throne which her husband had left vacant, and 1796, when Catherine II died, no less than sixty-six years were spent by Russia under the direct government of a woman. The male interludes were insignificant. One Tsar was a boy; another a baby; and the third a degenerate, who indeed attempted to rule, but was quickly put to death. Otherwise it appeared as if what a Russian writer, Mr. V. Poliakov, called the Matriarchate was becoming a permanent institution in the country. But in 1796 it suddenly ceased.

. . . . .

Catherine I was not the earliest example of female interference in State affairs under the Romanoff dynasty in Russia; for when the Tsar Theodore, son of Alexis, second of the line, died in 1682, without issue, he left the succession

to be disputed by two women on behalf of two boys. There was Theodore's sister Sophia, upholding the claim of their full brother Ivan V, who was half-witted; and there was Natalia, the beautiful second wife of Tsar Alexis, who claimed the throne for her son Peter, afterwards called the Great.

Natalia struck first and had the ten-year-old Peter crowned Tsar. But Sophia was strong enough to upset this arrangement, drove Natalia out, and got herself made regent for Ivan and Peter jointly. Though she continued in this position for seven years, her rule was but nominal, everything being left in the hands of Prince Galitzin, reputed her lover.

In 1689 Peter, now seventeen, threw off his half-sister's control and established himself as Tsar. He was already married, but had no love for his dull wife. Romance for him began later. First he took a German mistress, Anna Mons; and then—though it must not be supposed that he limited himself to these two affairs—he met her who was to become to him the ideal woman. A curious ideal, truly; but what could Peter the Great have if not a curious ideal?

In the year 1702 there lived in the Marienburg district of Prussia east of the Vistula a girl of nineteen, daughter of an Estonian peasant, adopted after her father's death by a Lutheran pastor, and married to a Swedish dragoon. This year Martha, whose other name is unknown, fell into the hands of the Russians, who were fighting the Swedes. She became a slave, and was under various masters until she passed into the possession of Alexander Menshikoff, Tsar Peter's favourite, once a baker's boy and now a

prince. At Menshikoff's house Peter saw her, and fell in love. Menshikoff was willing to pass her on; and Peter, when she bore him a child, took her to his palace as his regular mistress. She was received into the Greek Church, and was given the name of Catherine.

After another six years, during which his attention was almost entirely taken up with war, he married her; and next year, 1712, he had their wedding publicly celebrated in St. Petersburg. From that time onwards her spell over him never lessened. He furnished her with a magnificent establishment and heaped gifts upon her. Not even when he had grounds for suspecting her unfaithfulness did he cast her off. He had given her as Chamberlain of the Household a good-looking young man named Mons, brother of his discarded mistress, Anna. Rumours reached his ears of undue friendship between the two. But, while he had Mons arrested, he only brought against him other charges of misuse of his office, by taking bribes. Mons was executed. Peter, it is said, then took his wife driving past the place where the dead man's head was exposed to view, a sight which she bore without flinching. He made, however, no reproaches against her.

This affair is alleged by some of the historians to have hastened Peter's end. The question cannot be settled. In the first place, we do not know the true facts of the Mons affair.

Peter had long been anxious about the succession to the throne after his death. He hated Alexis, his son by his first wife, and in 1718 had him brutally murdered—according to one story taking part in the murder himself. He then had an infant son by Catherine proclaimed his heir

only to see him die very soon after. In 1722 he nominated Catherine herself as his successor, and two years later he emphasised this by having her crowned as empress-consort, so as to cut off his grandson Peter, son of Alexis. His difficulty was that, though Catherine had borne him in all eleven children, only two daughters survived.

The end came in January, 1725, when Peter expired without expressing on his death-bed any fresh desire as to the succession. Some would attribute this to his memory of Catherine's unfaithfulness, which made him unwilling to confirm her position as his successor. It is quite probable, however, that he expressed no wish because he was incapable of doing so. His reckless, stormy life crashed to its finish at the age of fifty-three.

Catherine's domination over this savage man cannot be explained as solely physical. She was no paragon in looks. Peter himself in the public proclamation which he issued at her coronation in 1724—though it must be remembered that she was then forty-one—says: "As to her person, she is somewhat thick-set and corpulent, yet, notwithstanding, perfectly agreeable and beautiful."* The first half of this description somewhat detracts from the second. She was quite illiterate and uncultured—not that letters or culture in a woman would have appealed to Peter. One of her best traits was her unruffled good temper. Then she was eminently adaptable. She did not interfere in politics, because she knew Peter would not tolerate it, and besides she had no taste in that direction. She could share the hardships of war, as she did in the campaign against the

* Quoted by V. Poliakov, *When Lovers Ruled Russia*, from an English translation, published in 1727, of Peter's proclamation three years earlier.

Turks in 1711. She could also share with him in his excesses of eating and drinking—especially drinking.

Such as she was, she never lost her grip on him, and in his last moments she was by his bed. Then she set herself to secure the throne; or, rather, she let her old friend Prince Menshikoff secure it for her. By bribes he made sure of the Imperial Guards, and the opposition, who supported the claims of Peter, son of Alexis, collapsed.

Catherine I had little over two years of sole rule, during which she was content to leave the real power in Menshikoff's hands, so long as she might enjoy herself after her fashion. Her desire to dominate man seemed to be exhausted by her life with Peter the Great; which must in truth have been exhausting. When she was forty-four she died, of dropsy and hard drinking, which had long been sapping her constitution.

The merit of her brief reign was that she left the guidance of affairs with those who were determined to carry on the policy of Peter the Great much better than the man himself. But Russia had to pay a big price, nevertheless, for Menshikoff, her chief adviser, was a greedy self-seeker, whose ideals were power and money. He persuaded the Empress that the best solution of the succession question after her death was to let the son of Alexis mount the throne as Peter II and to give him as bride Menshikoff's daughter.

Menshikoff did not allow for the young Peter's own wishes. Peter was willing to be Tsar, but wanted neither Menshikoff's rule nor his daughter. At the astonishingly early age of fourteen, helped of course by older advisers, Peter took advantage of a temporary absence of Menshikoff

from St. Petersburg to arrange for his arrest on his return. He packed him and his daughter off to Siberia, and prepared to govern Russia through his friends, who were members of the old aristocracy, opposed to the ideas of Peter the Great. Next year, 1730, however, he succumbed to smallpox, before attaining his fifteenth birthday.

With Peter II the male line of the Romanoffs came to an end. The choice of a successor lay between Anna, Duchess of Courland, daughter of Ivan V, a widow of thirty-seven, and one of the daughters of Peter the Great and Catherine I, of whom the younger, Elizabeth, was about twenty-one and unmarried, while the elder, Anna, had married into the Holstein family. The aristocratic party decided in favour of Ivan's daughter and fetched her from Courland, making her first agree to rule under a Constitution, which meant leaving the power in their hands. Anna came to St. Petersburg, where she was immediately won over by the military party, who wanted no such government as the old aristocrats proposed. When the Constitution was brought to her to sign she tore it up; and, with the Army behind her, there was nothing to be done by the other side.

Anna Ivanovna, Empress of Russia for ten years, was a tall, stout, grim-looking woman, with a countenance described by her enemies as inspiring dread. In spite of her action over the Constitution, however, she was not a woman of strong mind. She was entirely under the influence of a handsome favourite, whom she had promised not to bring with her to Russia, but whom she brought nevertheless. This was Ernst Johann Biron, grandson of a groom in the service of the Dukes of Courland, who had

been introduced to her when she was a young widow at Mitau and captured her sensual heart. He swayed her till her death, and grossly abused his power. He despised the Russians, trampled on the nobles, filled the Government and the Army with Germans, and enriched himself immensely. To his mistress he was a harsh tyrant. She bore his treatment meekly, handing it on, however, to everyone in a position of dependence upon her.

When it became plain that the Empress's life was drawing to its end a successor had to be thought of. Biron advised the choice of the newly-born son of Anna Leopoldovna, daughter of her sister Catherine, Duchess of Mecklenburg. The Empress acquiesced, and adopted the baby Ivan as her heir. Then in 1740 she died, having nominated Biron (whom she had only three years previously forced the Courlanders to accept as their Duke) regent during the child's minority.

This arrangement was soon upset. Biron was detested, and Anna Leopoldovna found plenty to help her drive him out. She banished him to Siberia, and made herself regent for her son. But her regency in turn only lasted a few months. She alienated her supporters, neglected affairs, for which she had no capacity, and finally took a step which ended in ruin. She aroused against her another woman, and one of much more vigorous personality than herself.

Elizabeth, youngest daughter of Peter the Great, had lived a life of obscurity since her mother's death. Under the Empresss Anna she had been in disgrace for an affair with an uneducated young guardsman, whom she had taken to her estate in the country, living with him in

Elizabeth, Empress of Russia.

From an engraving after a painting by Benner.

humble style as his wife until Anna intervened and sent him to Siberia. Elizabeth was impenitent and took another lover, this time a chorister from the Imperial chapel, Alexis Razumovsky. There was talk of an advantageous marriage for her; for, after all, she was Tsar Peter's daughter. But nothing came of it in Anna's reign, during which she remained a nonentity.

The regent, Anna Leopoldovna, apparently thought Elizabeth would be better out of the way, so she proposed to her a marriage with some small German prince. This was not at all to Elizabeth's taste. And she was confirmed in her determination to resist by the French representative at the Court of St. Petersburg, who was scheming to defeat the pro-Austrian policy of the present Russian Government. A plot was formed to put Elizabeth on the throne, which was nearly betrayed by the indiscretion of Elizabeth's doctor, L'Estocq. Indeed, something did come to the Regent Anna's ears; but when she spoke of it to Elizabeth and received assurances that she had no thoughts of the throne, she took no action.

Elizabeth, however, went straight back from her talk with the regent and told L'Estocq, who urged her not to lose a minute. The same night they took a sledge to the barracks of the Preobazinsky Guards, where Elizabeth made a fervent appeal to the rank and file to support the daughter of Peter the Great. They responded at once. Not only was she Peter's daughter, but she was personally popular with them, as with the ordinary mass of Russians, as a woman of like tastes with themselves, not a hanger-on of the Court, where foreigners counted for so much.

Getting back into her sledge and accompanied by her

soldiers, Elizabeth proceeded to the palace, surprised the regent and her husband in bed, and sent them and the baby Ivan to safe custody. Next morning there was no resistance, and so, at the age of thirty-two, Elizabeth, daughter of Peter, was Empress of Russia. The nominal reign of Ivan VI had lasted little over a year. The rest of his wretched life was spent in captivity, while women ruled in his place. His mother, the ex-regent, died a prisoner five years after her fall.

Yet Elizabeth was not reputed a cruel or vindictive woman. Tyrannical she certainly was, in her later years, to those she destined to succeed her. This we shall see. But she had a soft side to her nature. At the beginning of her reign she settled down to a curious double life. On one side, she was the Tsarina ; on the other, the wife of Alexis Razumovsky, whom she secretly married, though she never had their children declared legitimate. Fortunately for her, Razumovsky was one of the best of the favourites who abounded in Russian history of this period. With little, originally, to recommend him except his looks and his voice, he did not presume upon the fortune which had come his way. He accepted from Elizabeth the positions of Grand Chamberlain and of Field-Marshal (!), but did not use them to enrich himself. As far as he had influence over Elizabeth, it tended to her good.

Elizabeth was too much of her father's daughter to remain faithful (for not even to his beloved Catherine was Peter always true), but she set up no official favourite until Razumovsky began to grow old, when she chose the young Count Ivan Shuvaloff. Rumour assigned her also a kindness for his brother, Alexander. She did not develop

the system of favouritism to the extent that Catherine II developed it afterwards. But she made no pretence of hiding it.

Nor did she conceal her pleasure in eating and drinking, to which both her parents, it will be remembered, were addicted. She spent vast sums on banquets, and had the "Hermitage" specially built, so that she might with the greater comfort and privacy indulge in her debauches with her chosen friends.

Building was a craze with her; and it is curious that she took as her model the French royal style of architecture, seeing that she was little more cultured at heart than her mother had been.

In appearance we are told that she was beautiful before her excesses had their effect on her. She certainly surpassed her mother, beautiful though she was in Peter's eyes; the Empress Anna, of whom it was said that she only looked well from behind; and the Regent Anna, who was plain, short, and insignificant. In her robes she had no little majesty of bearing, and she expended a prodigious amount of money on dress. She could tolerate no comparisons of other women with herself, and is reported to have sent an indiscreet boaster to Siberia.

If her reign was good for Russia, it was because she was shrewd enough to attempt, or allow her ministers to attempt, little new. She was patriotic, according to her lights, and used the services of Russians rather than foreigners, which made for stability. When she was forced into war with Prussia, the conduct of it was entrusted to a sound Russian commander, who had almost brought Frederick to his knees when Elizabeth's reign ended.

Elizabeth had been faced by the usual trouble of Russian rulers of this period. Who was to succeed her? Having married Razumovsky, but having no intention of recognising a son by him as her heir, she was forced to look outside Russia. She would not consider Ivan VI, whom she had ousted from the throne. But there was Romanoff blood also in another boy, Peter Ulric of Holstein. Her elder sister, Anna, had married the Duke of Holstein and had borne him a son. Both parents were dead, leaving him an orphan, when in the second year of her reign the Empress Elizabeth decided to bring him to Russia, declare him her heir, and have him trained for his future duties.

It was, alas! an unhealthy soil to which the boy was transplanted; and he was a weakling. But now the story of Elizabeth merges into that of the much greater woman who was to carry on from her the tradition of women upon the throne of Russia.

. . . . .

It was in the new year of 1744 that the fourteen-year-old daughter of a German princeling set out for Russia in the charge of her mother, a clever but ill-tempered woman of the Holstein ducal family, who had never inspired the girl with much affection. She had bidden goodbye, as it turned out for ever, to her father, to whom she was attached, though he was a rather colourless person, overshadowed by his wife.

The object of the long journey from Zerbst to Moscow, made entirely by coach, through bitter winter weather, was matrimony. An invitation had just been received from the Empress Elizabeth of Russia for Sophia Augusta

Frederika to visit Moscow in the company of her mother; and the Prince and Princess Christian August of Anhalt-Zerbst knew what that meant. The heir of Russia must have a bride. If their daughter were approved, she would be that bride. She, too, probably knew; for her father's parting gift to her was a treatise on the Greek Church. If she knew, she was aware that her possible husband was her second cousin Peter, a little older than herself, whom she had met once, four years ago, and had not much liked.

The journey lay through Berlin, where mother and daughter were welcomed by Frederick, delighted at the idea of a German match for the future Tsar of Russia. From Berlin they pressed on; for they had to be in Moscow before February 21st, Peter's sixteenth birthday. At Riga they were on Russian territory.

The girl never left Russia again in her life, though it lasted over half a century more. Thoroughly German though she was by blood, she identified herself completely with Russia, its language, and its religion. Not only that, but she won for herself the name of being the second founder of her adopted country. The work of Peter the Great was carried on by her who was in her lifetime acclaimed as "Catherine the Great": a title of which posterity has admitted the justice. It was an astonishing metamorphosis.

Yet her introduction to her future home was not encouraging. The coach journey was very hard, if the welcomes at Riga, St. Petersburg and Moscow were warm. When she saw her future husband, she found him unprepossessing in appearance, sickly in health, bad in manners, and undeveloped in mind. She also discovered him

already addicted to drink and to low life. He soon told her that, though resigned to marrying her, he was in love with one of his aunt's maids of honour.

In other ways matters did not go smoothly. She fell seriously ill, and, after being bled sixteen times in twenty-seven days, recovered to see herself looking, as she writes in her diary, "frightfully ugly." Meanwhile her mother had a violent quarrel with the Empress over her medical treatment, and nearly spoilt the marriage thereby.

But Elizabeth finally decided that she would be a suitable wife for the Grand Duke Peter. She worked hard at her Russian and her study of the Greek faith, and was readily converted, being given the name of Catherine. Her betrothal followed. Peter had an attack of smallpox, which left him plainer still, and delayed the wedding. At last, however, in August, 1745, when Catherine was sixteen years and four months old and had been in Russia a year and a half, she was duly married, and her mother went off home, after further quarrels with the Empress. This was the last she saw of either of her parents.

Dreary years followed. Peter was worse after his marriage, and made no pretence of loving his wife; though, curiously, he leant on her for support. The Empress tyrannised over them and kept them in continual bondage, completing Peter's ruin and helping to drive Catherine to intrigue.

She was possessed of sufficiently good looks—pleasing rather than beautiful, she describes herself in these days—and was developing a charm of manner which was later to impress all who came into touch with her. At her father's home at Dornburg she had been well educated, particularly

in French, and she was an assiduous reader. But she was no blue-stocking, and found the time hang heavily on her hands. She must have some distraction. Her natural advantages promised her one, which life at the Court of Moscow could at least provide.

Some six years after her marriage Catherine began to stray; and she went on. No one seemed to care. A son, Paul, was born in 1754, a daughter (who soon died) in 1758. Neither was attributed to Peter.* The Empress, while making handsome presents to the mother, took both children away to bring up herself. Peter said nothing, and even made a friend of Stanislas Poniatovsky, the handsome young Pole who was reputed to be the daughter's father.

The life of wearisome bondage to the imperious Elizabeth, varied by little except such affairs, went on. But a brain like Catherine's was too powerful to rest content with this for ever. What was to happen when Elizabeth should die, as must happen in the not very distant future? Could she endure to be Tsar Peter's wife—and would she be so, when he had the power to get rid of her and take another as Tsarina?

Catherine listened to flattering suggestions that it would be better for Russia if she, rather than Peter, should rule. It is not certain how much was discovered of this scheme. Some of its promoters were arrested. But a

* Paul's father was rumoured, and is said by Catherine herself in her private diary, to have been Sergius Saltikoff, apparently her first lover, who disgusted her by his debauched conduct while she was bearing her child, and was sent abroad by the Empress. It is very curious, however, that there were so many points of likeness between Paul and his official father, and that he paid such reverence to his memory. See p. 227.

private quarrel between Catherine and Peter intervened, which caused Catherine to write to the Empress, begging to be allowed to return home—the only time that she expressed such a wish. Elizabeth, however, would have none of this. She had both husband and wife up before her, and lectured them soundly. She sent a reassuring message to Catherine later, and after this treated her better, allowing her to see her son. It may be that the Empress contemplated putting Paul, whom she dearly loved, on the throne, with Catherine as regent. Peter she frankly dismissed as a fool. But she died too soon, in December, 1761, and Peter came to the throne after twenty years of slavery to his aunt.

Catherine was thirty-two when she reached this crisis in her life. If she had been in bonds under Elizabeth, at least she had been safe. Now she was not even safe. Peter's friends (for he had friends, despite his character) had no use for her. For years he had been devoted to Elizabeth Vorontzoff, the maid of honour, and her family had justifiable hopes of seeing her Empress before long, if it rested with Peter to say.

But Catherine, of course, had foreseen her danger, and had laid her plans. It was a case of her friends against Peter's. Which would prevail? Peter had made himself intensely unpopular by his craze for everything German, including the use of the language and of German-modelled uniforms in the Army. He had an unbounded admiration for Frederick the Great, the war against whom, when practically won, he brought to an end at the earliest possible moment, thereby saving Frederick. This ranged against him the patriotic Russian party, who rallied to Catherine,

now as Russian as themselves. Among the leaders were the brothers Orloff, of whom the second, Gregory, was one of Catherine's lovers, succeeding Poniatovsky.

On May 22nd, 1762, when the peace with Prussia was celebrated at St. Petersburg, the Tsar sealed his doom. Not only did he insult his wife in public, but he was with difficulty prevented from having her arrested. Then, like the fool he was, he rode off with Elizabeth Vorontzoff to his suburban palace, Oranienbaum, leaving Catherine behind in St. Petersburg. Little as he knew it, he had said farewell to his throne.

The well-known story need not be told again how the Revolution of 1762 was carried out without the loss of a single life (except Peter's); how regiment after regiment, corrupted mainly by the Orloffs, declared enthusiastically for a change of government; how Catherine, riding astride in the uniform of a colonel of the Guards, led her troops to the Peterhof; how Peter was arrested at Oranienbaum, after a futile attempt to escape; how he was sent away, in the charge of the brutal Alexis Orloff, Gregory's brother, to a place out of sight of St. Petersburg; and how in a few days he was dead. There was a widespread suspicion of poison, which Catherine was quick to allay by means of a reassuring *post-mortem* report, assigning colic as the cause of death. But it is now known that Peter was slain, the actual murderer being said to be Theodore Bariatinsky, who picked a quarrel with him.

Catherine was not present at the funeral, at the request of advisers anxious to spare her feelings, they said; and, after the necessary lying-in-state, the body was buried without elaborate ceremony.

Later in life Catherine composed an epitaph for herself, which, however, was not used: "She forgave easily, and hated no one." For the most part, no doubt, this was justified. But in the circumstances of Peter's end it is hard to find proof of her forgiveness. She had very much to forgive, it is true. This does not excuse the callous way in which she wrote to Stanislas Poniatovsky of her husband's last "illness." Still less would it excuse her connivance at his murder, if we knew that she connived.

Peter III only reigned six months. The German princess who had become Tsarina of Russia was to reign for thirty-four years, with only two protests against her authority—a plot in 1764 to set free poor Ivan VI, now an imbecile, who was at once put to death; and a rising in 1774, under a mock-Peter, which gave some trouble. Otherwise Catherine was accepted without demur; and she really ruled Russia, leaving her impress very deeply on all aspects of the country's life, its laws, its government, its foreign policy, its Navy, its territory, its towns, and its population. A Polish prince, Adam Czartorisky—writing after Poland's spoliation, and therefore not inclined to take too favourable a view of one of the spoilers—says that she left her impress also in another way. She was so successful that she could do whatever she liked. She confirmed the servility of the Russian character, and it occurred to no one to criticise her dissolute morals.

It is not, of course, true that Catherine introduced looseness of morals into the Russian Court. It was there long before her, as we have seen, and she made it neither worse nor better. She gave the favourite of the day a more definite, practically official, status; and she excelled

Catherine II, Empress of Russia.
From a painting after Lambi.

her predecessors in the number of her favourites. Anna had one, Biron (whom, by the way, Catherine released from Siberia); Elizabeth at least two, Razumovsky and Shuvaloff; but Catherine ten in succession. She paid a high price for her fancy, as it was estimated that beyond the expense of their salaries and their rooms at the palace, the ten had nearly ninety-three million roubles' worth in presents from her, of which Potemkin got over half. Estates, with serfs attached, were a common parting gift at the end of a liaison.

Catherine tried to disguise the facts; perhaps successfully disguised them in her own eyes. Her favourites were her "pupils," whom she was training to be useful to Russia. But it was a thin pretence in nearly every case. She called Gregory Orloff a truly great man. In the judgment of his contemporaries he does not appear so. Still less does he in the judgment of posterity; nor can his services to Russia be recognised, except in so far as he helped in the Revolution of 1762. What personal popularity he had was due to his generosity; but he could well afford it.

With Gregory Potemkin the case was different, it may be admitted. Potemkin was a man of great force of character; and Catherine was not surrounded with such men. Potemkin added the Crimea and the Caucasus to the Empire, Russianised the Black Sea, built the Navy there, and reorganised the Army. With all his natural grossnesses he did great work for his country. In his relations with Catherine he was wise, in that he could retain his hold over her mind when he no longer had, nor wished to have, control of her body. She could rely upon him, and when he

died in 1791 she wrote to her old friend the Baron Melchior von Grimm (first met at her wedding and afterwards her constant correspondent) that she felt his loss " like a blow from a sledge-hammer."

Of all her favourites only these two, Orloff and Potemkin, dared aspire to marriage with Catherine. She listened to Orloff's suggestions, and even went so far as to consult her ministers as to the possibility of the idea. " The Empress can do as she pleases," she was told, " but Madame Orloff can never be Empress of Russia." She took the hint. As for Potemkin, in spite of repeated rumours to the contrary, she knew better than to marry him. She was forty-five when she installed him as favourite, and was sufficiently woman of the world to see that he was no prince consort for one who wished to rule.

Of the eight other favourites none counted for much, either good or ill, except the last, Plato Zuboff, whom she took up when she was sixty and he twenty-two. He was a mischievous young man, crafty and self-seeking, with ambitions to interfere in politics. Catherine had not previously let her " affairs " influence the affairs of Russia. Potemkin's case, of course, was a justifiable exception. But at sixty her vision was not so clear as it had been.

Catherine was no mere sensualist. Apart from love she was simple in her tastes, and particularly with regard to food and drink a great contrast to Catherine I and Elizabeth. But she had an enthusiastic admiration for beauty—though by no stretch of imagination could Potemkin, the swarthy, one-eyed Colossus, be called beautiful. It has been questioned whether she had

passions, because they died down, never turning to hate, but leaving her on excellent terms with her ex-favourites. Might it not be that novelty had its charm for her, while kindness of heart forbade her treating the discarded lover ill?

Against the kindness of heart which her friends universally attributed to her might be adduced her behaviour towards her husband and her son, the Grand Duke Paul. Peter has been dealt with. To Paul her attitude is enigmatic. If he was not Peter's son, as she maintained (in private, of course) that he was not, she treated him as if he were. She bound him down as tyrannically as Elizabeth had bound Peter, kept him short of money even at the age of forty, took his sons from him, and produced in him such a state of mind that he was wont to refer to her as "the old woman."

Whosoever's son he was, Paul acted as though he were Peter's. One of his first acts after his mother's death was to have Peter's body exhumed from the insignificant tomb where it lay and solemnly reburied as other Tsars were. On the coffin was placed the crown which Peter had not lived long enough to be crowned with in state; and among the pall-bearers was forced to walk Alexis Orloff, whom Paul suspected of the murder. Nor did Paul merely make a show of sonhood. He had Peter's taste for playing the soldier, constantly wearing uniform, and surrounding himself with military pomp. In other ways he resembled him, and strangely, too, in his end; for he was murdered by conspirators, after a reign of only four years.

If she was a harsh mother to Paul, however, Catherine was devoted to his sons Alexander and Constantine,

lavishing on them, and particularly the elder,* all a grandmother's doting affection. She was supposed to nourish the idea of making Alexander her heir instead of his father; but, if she did, her sudden death prevented her from carrying out her wish. She was fond of Paul's daughters also; and it was chagrin at the failure, on the very day appointed for the betrothal, of her scheme to marry Alexandra to Gustavus IV of Sweden which was supposed to have hastened her end.

On this day, September 21st, 1796, she had a slight apoplectic fit. On November 5th she was found lying in a far more serious fit in her bedroom. She never recovered consciousness, and died the next night. Paul, summoned from his palace at Gatshina, arrived in splendid military dress, looked at his mother's body, saluted, and left the death-chamber without a word. But what was there to be said—by him?

If, however, Catherine did not die regretted by her son, she was widely regretted by a vast number of people. To the masses she left the memory of a reign which was a great advance upon its predecessors in general prosperity and internal quiet. It would be too much to talk of good government, but it was at least tolerable government. At

* There was a letter in *The Times* of May 6th, 1929, in which a passage was quoted from a letter written by Catherine to Grimm, accompanied by a rough sketch, describing how her grandson Alexander was dressed by her when six months old:

"All is sewn together and is put on at a go, and is fastened at the back by three or four little hooks. There is a fringe round the garment, and that dresses him quite well. The King of Sweden and the Prince of Prussia have asked for, and have got, the pattern of M. Alexander's garment. There is no tie in it all, and the child hardly knows that he is being dressed. His arms and legs are put into the garment at once and that ends it. This garment is a stroke of genius of mine which I did not wish you not to know of."

Court she was wonderfully popular, even though they might secretly laugh at her weaknesses as she aged. Her power lay in the combination of her intellect, not with rare beauty—for that she had never had, and with the years came a coarsening and a certain mannishness—but with rare charm. Her friends made a regular cult of her; and she was constantly adding to the number of her friends. These included women as well as men. But men, not unnaturally, felt her charm most, and this apart from all question of sexual relations. Her favourites did not write about her. It was the Austrian Minister at her Court, the Prince de Ligne, who paid her the most graceful tribute when he wrote that it was Catherine's fascinating simplicity which first captivated him, and her genius which made him follow her.

"I have guided my little ship to the best of my ability," wrote Catherine of herself in her old age. She was thinking of herself as the Empress; but she might have said it also of Catherine the woman. Such a woman as she was, she guided her ship with extraordinary skill in a sea of extraordinary dangers.

One great danger she risked by her transfers of her favours; but even this she passed through without harm. She had some difficulty in getting rid of Orloff after ten years of association; but he ultimately gave way and took a wife to whom he was apparently much attached, as her premature death was followed by his complete breakdown in mind. Potemkin really dismissed himself, and even helped his mistress in the choice of some of her later favourites. Only with Zuboff were his relations strained. That young man's arrogance might have led to an open

rupture, had not Potemkin removed the difficulty by dying.

Though she was skilful in avoiding the risks which sprang from her peculiar sexual weakness, Catherine sadly damaged her name by her displays of it. But it cannot be said that her success as a ruler was thereby seriously impaired.

. . . . .

It has been said before that with Catherine II the phenomenon of woman-rule in Russia suddenly ceased. But there was a curious abortive attempt to prolong it. Four years after her death, Tsar Paul lay murdered. The widowed Empress Maria Fedorovna—she had been the Princess Sophia of Würtemburg, and was his second wife—attempted to get herself proclaimed Empress, but failed, and Catherine's idolised Alexander succeeded to his father's throne.

CHAPTER X

THE DANCER POLITICIAN

THE present writer is well aware that the story of Lola Montez, as she called herself, has of late been rather overdone. It has even been made the theme, *diablement changé en route*, of a "talkie" by that idol of the film enthusiasts, Douglas Fairbanks.

Nevertheless, it does not seem right to exclude Lola Montez, in one of her various aspects, from the company of Dominant Women. Between the end of 1846 and February, 1848, her influence on Bavarian politics was profound, and, it may be added, beneficial. A violent reaction followed, which undid her work, but that, of course, was not her fault. She had fought against forces which were in the end too strong for her. It is astonishing that she had been able to gain a temporary victory.

Her life may be said to divide itself into five sections:

(1) Girlhood and married life in Ireland and India, when she appears as "a good little thing," "young and lively."

(2) The stage, both after her divorce and again after she had been driven from Bavaria.

(3) Her brief period of power at Munich.

(4) Her career as a public lecturer and as a writer on the Arts of Beauty.

(5) Her closing years as a charitable and pious woman.

Only section (3) concerns us much. But it is necessary to give some attention to the steps which led up to her introduction into Bavarian politics, and to strive to see what manner of woman she was who, after being violently denounced as a mere courtesan, was able to display real statesmanship in a country entirely foreign to her.

Marie Dolores Eliza Rosanna Gilbert was born at Limerick some time in 1818. Her father was a Lieutenant Edward Gilbert, of the 25th Foot, who is said to have risen from the ranks; and her mother had been a Miss Oliver. Lola—this name was an affectionate diminutive of Dolores—had a decidedly decorative imagination, and at various times in her life told amusingly different stories as to her ancestry. For instance, her father was a son of Sir Edward and Lady Gilbert, and was a captain at twenty years of age. As a matter of fact, he appears to have died a subaltern. Then her mother was an Oliver of Castle Oliver, "a descendant from the Spanish noble family of Montalvo," who were originally of Moorish blood. "So that," as she says in her Autobiography,* "the fountain-head of the blood which courses in the veins of the *erratic* Lola Montez is Irish and Moorish-Spanish—a somewhat combustible mixture, it must be confessed."

Her mother, she said, ran away from a convent to marry her father. In view of her lifelong hatred of Roman Catholicism, this tale about her mother is curious.

---

* So called. Really two lectures on herself, delivered in the United States, and apparently written up for her by the Rev. C. Chauncy Burr. They are written in the third person.

Lola Montez

At another time she claimed in a letter to the London papers to have been born in Seville in 1823, the daughter of a Spanish officer in the service of Don Carlos, while her mother was "a lady of Irish extraction, born at the Havannah, and married for the second time to an Irish gentleman, which, I suppose, is the cause of my being called Irish, and sometimes English."

George Augustus Sala says that she once proposed to him to write her life, "starting with the assumption that she was a daughter of the famous matador Montes."

We shall see other variants of her tale. The real truth is, as has been stated, that she was born at Limerick in 1818. In October, 1822, her father was transferred to the 44th Foot, and went out to India to join his regiment, taking with him his wife and little daughter. In 1825 he died of cholera at Dinapore. His widow soon, apparently by his dying desire, took as second husband his best friend, Captain Craigie, who seems to have been a very amiable man. It was decided to send Lola home, and she was consigned to the care of his father in Scotland. Later she was received into the family of another friend, Major-General Sir Jasper Nicolls, and was sent with his daughters to finish her education in Paris.

In 1837 she was summoned to rejoin her mother at Bath. Here she learnt, to her dismay, that her hand had been promised to Sir Abraham Lumley, a rich elderly Supreme Court Judge from Calcutta. She took the nearest means available to escape this fate. Staying on leave in Bath was Lieutenant Thomas James, a good-looking young officer in the Bengal Native Foot, who had accompanied her

mother from India. They fell in love with one another, and one day they eloped. James's intentions were honourable, for he took Lola over to his family in Ireland. There was a difficulty about their getting married, for Lola was under age, and her mother's consent was required. It took some time to induce Mrs. Craigie to abandon her cherished scheme, and she refused to be present at the wedding, which was celebrated at Meath parish church on July 23rd, 1837.

When James's leave was up he returned to India with his wife, who at once became the belle of both Calcutta and Simla. "Mrs. J.," writes the Hon. Emily Eden, sister of the Governor-General, "is undoubtedly very pretty, and such a merry, unaffected girl. She is only seventeen now, and does not look so old." When the Jameses went to Karnal, Punjab, Miss Eden writes again: "[Mrs. James] is very pretty, and a good little thing, apparently, but they are very poor, and she is very young and lively, and if she falls into bad hands she would soon laugh herself into foolish scrapes. At present the husband and wife are very fond of each other, but a girl who marries at fifteen hardly knows what she likes."

As these letters were written in 1839, we may presume that Lola had been romancing about her age.

In spite of the fondness which Miss Eden saw between husband and wife, James proved faithless, and eloped with a fervent admirer of his, a Mrs. Lomer, taking her to the Nilgiri Hills. The stranded Lola had no alternative but to go to her mother and stepfather in Calcutta. Mrs. Craigie was not at all sympathetic, and said that the best thing for her to do was to go back to England. Craigie thereupon

gave her a generous cheque, and made arrangements for her reception by his family in Perthshire.

So the twenty-three-year-old grass widow left India for good, and at the end of 1841 or early in 1842 reached Southampton, where she was met by the representative of the Craigies. She absolutely declined, however, to go to Perthshire, and announced her determination of making her home in London. With her cheque and her jewelry, she had about £2,000 in hand. But there was another reason for her independence, as soon appeared. At the end of 1842 an action for divorce was brought by Lieutenant James in the Consistory Court of London, alleging his wife's adultery with Captain Lennox, A.D.C. to the Governor of Madras. As Lola had been intimate with Lennox on the voyage from India, and had since been living with him, first at the Imperial Hotel, Covent Garden, and then in St. James's Street, she put in no appearance, and judgment was given against her.

Lola imagined that this was a divorce. As a matter of fact, until a further step was taken in the House of Lords the decree was not absolute, and James took no further step. All that had really happened so far was a legal separation. She was destined to find out one day that she was still tied.

Her mother, it is said, went into mourning when she heard the news. No one came to Lola's rescue, and she was allowed to go to the Devil as she pleased. Lennox deserted her, and she might have become what she was accused of being, a courtesan. With her looks, opportunities were plenty. But she had other views. She decided to try the stage, and went to Miss Fanny Kelly's academy of dramatic art. There she found that she had more aptitude

for dancing; and she spent four months under a Spanish professor. She claims to have gone on to Madrid for further study, and while there to have visited her kinsfolk, the Montalvos. This Madrid visit is probably a myth. Lola's Spanish was never good.*

Yet her idea of posing as a Spanish dancer was a step to success of a kind. Somehow she managed to attract the notice of Benjamin Lumley, the celebrated lessee of Her Majesty's Theatre. On June 3rd, 1843, he brought her out as "Donna Lola Montez, première danseuse from the Teatro Real, Madrid." There was a full and exceedingly fashionable house. Unfortunately, among the people of fashion was the elderly rake, Lord Ranelagh, whose offer of protection she had refused after Lennox deserted her, and who was determined on revenge. He was with a party of friends in one of the boxes. When Lola came on the stage, looking very lovely, and received with rapturous applause, he exclaimed, "Why, there is Betty James!" Instigated by him, his friends began to hiss, and the hissing was taken up in other parts of the house.

The Press notices next day were good; but Ranelagh was not content with what he had done, and spread stories about the town, which so influenced Lumley that he terminated the contract. The unhappy Lola wrote to *The Era* and other papers, denying the reports that she was not really the person she pretended to be, but had long been known in London as a disreputable person. "I am a native of Seville," she added, "and until the 14th of April

* It is a curious story which is told by Lord Malmesbury, the date of which he places in the winter of 1841. He says he travelled in the same train with her from Southampton to London, when she spoke in bad English, and told him that she was the widow of Don Diego Leon, who had been shot by the Carlists.

last, when I landed in England, I never set foot in this country, and I never saw London before in my life."

She knew, however, that she had failed, for the time at least, irretrievably, and set out for the Continent to see whether her luck would be better there. She went first to Brussels, with two objects in view: first, to secure a dancing engagement at the Opera House, and, secondly, to get into the good graces of the King, William II, a man of over fifty. The success of her second object was, of course, dependent on that of her first, and this she was unable to attain. The Opera House management refused her an engagement. She was in great straits, having exhausted her money, and was reduced to pawning her clothes and singing in the streets, until a good-natured German took compassion on her and escorted her to Warsaw, to try for an engagement at the Opera there.

This, at least, is one version of the tale. According to another, she went to Dresden and Berlin on the way to Warsaw, and was a great success at both places, meeting all kinds of celebrities. This is what she says in the Autobiography. All we know for certain is that she did visit Berlin and Dresden before or after Poland and Russia —perhaps both before and after. At Dresden she had a liaison with Franz Liszt, who cruelly deserted his mistress of nine years' standing and the mother of his children, the Comtesse d'Augoult, a lady who wrote under the name of "Daniel Stern." The Comtesse vainly implored Liszt to come back to her, and then renounced him for ever and went with her children to Paris.

In spite of what the Autobiography says, it is much more likely that this visit to Dresden, when she met Liszt,

came after Warsaw and St. Petersburg. If she was in such a state of destitution in Brussels and dependent on the generosity of her German friend, she would hardly have had an opportunity to create a stir in Berlin and Dresden. But she was such an inveterate romancer that corroboration is always required before we can believe her statements, and corroboration is very often lacking.

Anyhow, Lola reached Warsaw, and was given an engagement to dance at the Opera. With the Poles she was a great success, and at last she could feel that "the Spanish dancer" had made good. Unfortunately, also, she won another success. Prince Paskievitch, the Russian Viceroy and the brutal oppressor of the Poles, fell violently in love with her and sent for her to come to see him at the palace one morning. She went, and, declaring his love, the Prince offered her a splendid country estate and loads of diamonds if she would become his mistress. He was a man of sixty, with a wife and family; and, if he was as described in the Autobiography, he was undeniably hideous.

The generous gifts, says Lola, were most respectfully and very decidedly declined. "A death's-head making love to a lady," she adds, "could not have been a more disgusting or horrible sight." But Paskievitch did not give up hope yet. He made further attempts through agents, including the director of the Opera, to win her over. Still failing, he planned revenge. For three nights in succession an organised clique at the Opera hissed the Spanish dancer. On the third night she could bear it no longer. According to her account, she "rushed down to the footlights and declared that those hisses had been set at her by the director because she had refused certain gifts

from the old Prince, his master. Then came a tremendous shower of applause from the audience; and the old Princess, who was present, both nodded her head and clapped her hands to the enraged and fiery little Lola." After the performance was over, she was escorted to her lodgings by an immense crowd of Poles, her devoted admirers.

But Paskievitch had another resource. He declared that she was a spy, and ordered her expulsion from Poland. But for the intervention of the French Consul, who claimed her as a French subject, she would have been sent to prison. Her trunks were opened before she left Poland, "under pretence that she was suspected of carrying on a secret correspondence with the enemies of the State."

It is rather curious, in the circumstances, that she was allowed to proceed to St. Petersburg. But she says she went there and was most amiably received by Nicholas I. She always, it may be noted, claims wide acquaintance with royalty. Her beauty, of which the chief points were her forget-me-not eyes and raven hair, no doubt was a passport into exalted circles,and she may not be exaggerating.

In the spring of 1844 we find Lola in Paris. One story makes her arrive in the company of Liszt; but, if so, the liaison was soon at an end, for Liszt did not stay in Paris. Lola appeared at the Opera on March 30th, but this was her only appearance there. Her dancing did not please the Parisians, and, apparently in pique at her failure, she kicked a slipper into one of the boxes.

Still, if she was a dancing failure, she was a social success, in the Bohemian and literary set. The elder

Dumas was a devotee of hers. Her greatest friend, however, was a young man called Dujarier, the literary editor of *La Presse*. She says that a marriage was arranged. They were undoubtedly lovers. Unhappily, Dujarier fell into a quarrel at a party with de Beauvallon, dramatic critic of *Le Globe*, fought a duel with him, and was killed. By his will he left Lola the equivalent of 20,000 francs.

In spite of her grief, Lola soon made a second appearance as a dancer in Paris, this time at the Porte-St.-Martin. Again she failed, and indignantly she answered the hisses of the audience with an expression of what she thought of them. "The fiery little Lola" was once more in evidence.

She decided to give up France as a bad job. But before she left she was called as witness in the trial of de Beauvallon who was accused of having practised beforehand with the pistols used in the duel with Dujarier. He was acquitted, but was ordered to pay 20,000 francs to the dead man's mother and sister. Lola had not much of importance to say in the witness-box; but she declared that she was a better shot than poor Dujarier, and if de Beauvallon wanted satisfaction she would have fought him herself. No doubt she would.

Leaving France, she went back to Germany. Albert Vandam says that she told him once, "The moment I get a nice round sum, I am going to try to hook a prince." Dujarier's legacy enabled her to make the attempt, but it took time. She visited several of the fashionable gambling resorts and met no one better than Prince Henry of Reuss-Schleiz, who gave her an invitation to his principality. Nothing came of this. She boxed people's ears—we shall see that this was a habit of hers—and she walked over his

flower-beds, so that he requested her to leave. But he was not worth "hooking." His principality was scarcely more than a large estate.

Now she took a step which brings her into the scope of this book. She came to Munich. Could she possibly have entertained any idea of achieving what she actually achieved? If so, her ambition was high. Ludwig I of Bavaria was one of the great German princes. Now sixty years of age, he had been a good soldier in his youth, fighting, though very unwillingly, under Napoleon. His nature, however, was artistic, and he delighted most in the society of men of artistic genius, among his friends being Wagner, to whom his grandson, Ludwig II, was one day to be so generous a supporter. Monuments to his good taste abound in Munich to-day; for he was an enthusiastic builder. At the same time, he could appreciate the uses of railways and waterways, and gave Bavaria both. He was a very popular king, and was happily married. Could a young woman masquerading as a Spanish dancer hope to hook such a fish?

Lola went to the Court Theatre and asked for an engagement. The director saw her dance, and was not satisfied. But, with her usual ability to make men friends, she met one of the royal A.D.C.'s and enlisted his support. He went to Ludwig and asked him to see Lola. "Am I to look at every dancing woman who comes to Munich and wants an engagement at the Court Theatre?" asked the King. "Pardon, sir," replied the A.D.C., "but this one is worth looking at."

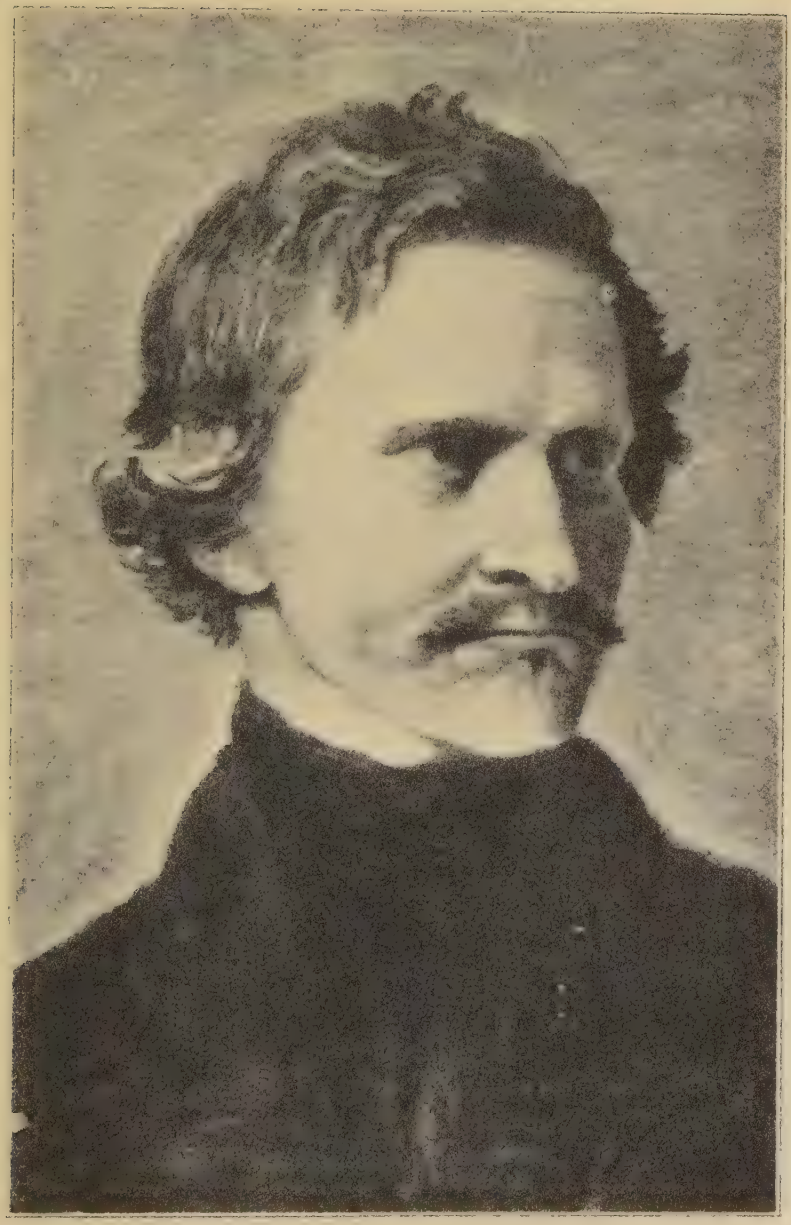
Ludwig consented to receive her, and was immediately overcome by her charms. "I am bewitched," he exclaimed

after the interview. He commanded her to give a performance at the Court Theatre, and of course the director had nothing more to say in the matter. "Señorita Lola Montez, of Madrid," was announced to appear in two dances between the acts, "in her Spanish national dances" on October 10th. She appeared, and, with the royal blessing on her, had a triumph. It is true that there were some hisses. A report had somehow gained currency that she was both a spy and a disreputable character.

Bavaria was at the time very much in the control of the Jesuit Order. Ludwig, when he first came to the throne twenty years back, had shown certain Liberal tendencies; but later, alarmed by the revolution in Paris in July, 1830, and its influence on Europe, he allowed the Jesuits full sway. His Minister of the Interior, Carl von Abel, worked hand in glove with them. Bavaria being so predominantly Roman Catholic, few complaints were heard.

It is quite likely, therefore, that Jesuit influence was used against the newcomer at the Court Theatre, of whom it was probably known that she was not a Roman Catholic, though the extent of her anti-Romanism had yet to be shown. But her enemies entirely failed to spoil her performance, and the general verdict was, or appeared to be, entirely favourable. The delighted Ludwig ordered a second performance, which took place four days later; and on this occasion the pit was packed with people who had their instructions to give Lola an ovation.

So infatuated was the King that he brought her to Court and introduced her with the words: "Gentlemen, I present to you my best friend." In order to get more of her society, he resolved to take lessons in Spanish



Ludwig I of Bavaria.
From a painting by Kaulbach.

with her as his teacher, a task for which she was scantily equipped. Still, it served as an excuse for the spending of time together.

The question naturally arises whether the friendship which had so suddenly sprung up between the beautiful young woman of twenty-nine and the sixty-year-old King was a purely intellectual one, as he maintained. So far she had given little proof of intellectual power, though what she was soon to do in Bavaria was to show that she had it. Her beauty, which Ludwig so passionately admired, is the stumbling-block. It is true that the Queen, Theresa, is never known to have exhibited any jealousy, and later offered to receive the favourite if Ludwig desired her to do so. But the Clerical party had no doubt that she was his mistress and did not hesitate to say so, not only in Bavaria, but in other parts of Germany, where the royal infatuation was made the butt of the newspapers.

The aid of Ludwig's sister, the Dowager Empress of Austria, Caroline Augusta, was enlisted in an attempt to get rid of the interloper by bribery. She offered Lola £2,000 if she would leave Bavaria; but the offer was firmly refused. Lola felt her strength growing. Under her guidance Ludwig began to return to the more Liberal ideas of his early reign. Barely had he known Lola for two months when he took from Carl von Abel, the friend of the Jesuits, his authority over education and public worship, and gave it to the more open-minded Baron von Schrenk. His determination to keep Lola as his friend and adviser grew stronger when his officials endeavoured to persuade him to get rid of her. The chief of the police was banished from Bavaria for such an attempt.

Ludwig, however, recognised that as a foreigner she might legitimately be obnoxious in Bavarian eyes. The remedy was obvious. She must be naturalised, and given a Bavarian title. He began with the naturalisation, sending his decree to von Abel to be countersigned. The Minister of the Interior consulted with von Schrenk and two others of the Ministry, who agreed with him to send a joint memorandum to the King, begging him to consider how national feeling in the country was wounded at the idea of being governed by a foreign woman with a branded reputation, and how the Press of other countries was giving publicity to scandalous tales. If he would not listen to them, they must resign their offices.

Ludwig did not hesitate. He gave the memorandists twenty-four hours in which to reconsider their attitude, and as they refused he dismissed them all. This was on February 16th, 1848. The same evening he went to a reception which Lola was holding in her house in Theresienstrasse, and told her what he had done. "I will not give up Lola," he exclaimed. "I never will give her up. My kingdom for Lola!"

He appointed a new and decidedly Liberal ministry, headed by Baron zu Rhein as Minister of the Interior, and with actually a Protestant as Minister of Justice—an unheard-of thing in Bavaria. Lola was jubilant. Her naturalisation followed, and then the bestowal on her of the titles of Countess of Lansfeld and Baroness Rosenthal, with an estate attached. A further appointment made her a Canoness of the Order of St. Theresa, of which the head was the Queen. The fact that she was not a Roman Catholic seems to have proved no obstacle. Finally, he

allotted to her a sum of 20,000 florins a year, on which to maintain the dignity of her position.

These were the public manifestations of his regard to her. Privately, he wrote fervent, and very indifferent, poetry to his "Lolita"; and he had her portrait painted and placed in the Gallery of Beauties in the palace, sitting before it often and gazing ardently, it is said. The symptoms must be confessed to have been of something more than merely intellectual friendship, unless Ludwig was a very abnormal man.

As the result of the establishment of the new ministry in Munich, the name of the Countess of Lansfeld was exalted among the Liberals and Protestants of Germany. But such were comparatively few in Bavaria; and, though at present the Clericals could do nothing except put up with defeat, an ominous scene soon occurred. The vast mass of the students at Munich University were Roman Catholics of the most pronounced views. One of their professors was dismissed by the King for openly expressing his sympathy with Carl von Abel, and the students determined to make a demonstration in his favour. He lived in the same street as Lola, and when they had finished their cheering for the professor they went on to her house and gave vent to very different sounds. Lola, never lacking in courage, stood at a window, laughing at them, and drank to them out of a glass of champagne. The King, on his way to pay her a visit, without an escort, had great difficulty in reaching her door. When he left again, hostile shouts, directed perhaps less against him than against the favourite, greeted him, and a body of troops had to be called to take him from Theresienstrasse to the palace.

Ludwig managed for a time to conciliate the students by removing certain unpopular restrictions on their liberty. But abuse of his favourite he found it hard to check. The Clerical newspapers offended the most. To them she was "The Pompadour of Bavaria," and the like. In her indignation, for all her Liberalism, she called for a Press censorship and for the closing down of the offices of her traducers. The King would not consent to this. In other matters, however, he regularly followed her advice, choosing a new Minister of the Interior, Berks, who was one of her warmest admirers. Other posts were also given to ministers still more Liberal than their predecessors. The Clericals spoke contemptuously of "the Lola ministry," but found it beyond their power to laugh it out of office.

Lola had, towards the end of 1847, moved to a new house specially built for her in Bärerstrasse by the architect Metzger, and here she reigned in state, her rooms thronged by distinguished men, and the King visiting her daily. He raised her income to over £5,000 a year, to meet the additional cost of her new home.

A writer about her at this period finds Lola a good conversationalist, never boring, a woman of distinguished manners, dressing well, and a graceful and hospitable hostess. On the other hand, he says, she had many faults. She loved power for its own sake. She was too hasty and too steadfast in her dislikes. She had not learnt sufficiently to "curb the passion which seems natural in her Spanish blood." (He does not mention what we hear elsewhere, that she was apt to box people's ears if annoyed with them.) She was capricious, and when inflamed, capable of rudeness, which she was the first to regret and apologise for. Her

one absorbing idea was to "extirpate the Jesuits root and branch from Bavaria." She saw a Jesuit in everyone she did not like. "This restless suspicion is a weakness inconsistent with her force of character."*

At the beginning of 1848 Lola was living as a queen in her "fairy palace," as her enemies called it, consulted by the King in all matters of State, and of necessity listened to with respect by his ministers. In six weeks her power had crumbled in the dust, involving the King's downfall also. It was an astonishing catastrophe, arising apparently out of a comparatively trivial incident.

Again it was the students of Munich University with whom Lola came into conflict. Since the previous disturbance those among them who were in sympathy with her Liberal views, though not very numerous in comparison with the rest, were strong enough to form themselves into a new students' corps, called the "Alemannia," at bitter enmity with the numerous older corps. Lola provided their uniforms for them, and they took pride in acting as a bodyguard to look after her safety.

On January 31st there was a general turn-out of the University to do honour to the funeral of the mystic writer, Professor Joseph Görres. The funeral over, the students bethought themselves of going to Bärerstrasse and demonstrating in front of Lola's house. Hearing the noise, the intrepid woman, accompanied only by two or three of the Alemannen, came out into the street to face the demonstrators, who received her with yells and opprobrious epithets. Her fiery temper could not brook this.

* G. H. Francis, in *Frazer's Magazine*, January, 1848. The article is quoted fully in Mr. Edmund D'Auvergne's *Lola Montez*.

"I shall have the University closed," she cried, whereon a rush was made for her. Her few supporters were overwhelmed, and with difficulty she gained the sanctuary of a church, whence she was rescued by the arrival of troops.

Ludwig must have been in a state of perplexity, for it was not for nine days that he carried out his favourite's threat, and then, after ordering the closing of the University and the departure of all students not belonging to Munich, on the next day, February 10th, he weakened and promised that the closing should only be till the end of the summer term. He had been approached by representatives of the townspeople, who pointed to the serious loss of trade which the departure of the non-Munich students meant to them. But he had failed to save the situation. The townspeople joined the students in calling for the banishment of the favourite and the immediate re-opening of the University. On the morning of the 11th the Palace was surrounded by a great armed mob to press these demands. The Cabinet met and implored the King to give way. He did. "My kingdom for Lola!" he had once said. Now he chose the kingdom, and abandoned his dear Lola.

We hope that he made a decent show of reluctance. Indeed, we may be sure that he did, since his infatuation had in no way abated. But his abandonment of the favourite is none the less a blot on his record. No doubt it was very wrong for a king to have a favourite, whether she was his mistress or not. After taking her up, however, and swearing eternal fidelity, it was the action of a pusillanimous man to drop her at the dictate of

an armed mob. He gained very little respite by it, as we shall see.

Ludwig did not venture to see Lola to convey his decision to her. In fact, he never saw her again. He sent an A.D.C. to her house with the order for her to leave Bavaria. Astounded, she refused to believe the news before Ludwig's signature was put before her eyes. Even then she must have thought that the order, having been obtained under duress, was not final. She left Theresienstrasse for the railway, her enemies having at least the decency not to attack her on the way. Taking the train for Augsburg, she got off at a wayside station and drove back to a village near Munich. With her, all the time, were three of her Alemannen bodyguard.

As soon as she had left Theresienstrasse a mob broke in and completely looted the "fairy palace." Ludwig came, unrecognised at first, and looked on with melancholy eyes at the scene of pillage. Suddenly, however, someone struck him a blow on the head which sent him reeling, and he was taken back to the palace. There were revolutionary elements about which took advantage of the agitation against the favourite to prosecute their designs against the throne. This was the great year of European revolution, 1848.

Lola stopped only one day at the village of Blutenberg. She still cherished hopes that Ludwig did not mean to desert her. On the night of February 12th she stole back to Munich, disguised as a boy,* and sought shelter in the

* One of the accusations her enemies used to make against her was that she liked wearing men's clothes. She says in her Autobiography: "Lola Montez was never dressed off the stage in men's apparel in her whole life, except when she went back disguised to Bavaria."

house of her friend Berks, Minister of the Interior. From here she sent a letter to Ludwig, begging to be allowed to see him. The answer was brought by a couple of policemen. Ludwig would not see her. She was shown a new order for her banishment. This she seized and, tearing it to pieces, threw it in the faces of the policemen, who thereupon produced their pistols. She saw that the game was up, and yielded.

What followed would almost convince us that Ludwig had gone off his head, were it not that we know that he lived twenty more years in a perfectly rational way. For the moment, however, he lost his wits. It was represented to him that Lola had overcome him by witchcraft—"I am bewitched," he had once said in a very different sense of the word—and he sent her to the house of an exorcist living in the Würtemberg village of Weinsberg, where she was put on starvation diet and reduced to a condition of "astonishing thinness," as the exorcist himself wrote. Then she was "mesmerised," and given asses' milk. This was in the middle of the nineteenth century, be it noted.

Why did "fiery little Lola" put up with this ridiculous treatment? Her spirit was not broken, for before the end of the month she managed to make her escape from the exorcist's clutches. The three Alemannen had been hovering about her ever since her downfall, and with their assistance now she got safely across the Swiss frontier.

In Switzerland she was *persona grata*, for it was believed, probably with good reason, that her influence had prevented Bavaria from interfering in the struggle between the Swiss

Confederates and the Sonderbund, or Catholic League, which had ended so successfully for the Confederates in 1847. She made a brief stay in Berne, where she bade farewell to her three Alemannen, who had given so splendid an example of loyalty, and then in early April set out for Rotterdam, on her way to England. It is said that at Rotterdam she narrowly escaped meeting Prince Metternich, like herself a refugee making for London. This champion of absolutism, born, as he said, to prop up the decaying structure of European society, and for so many years the all-powerful Chancellor of the Austrian Empire, had been driven from Vienna by revolution. He had always been a bitter enemy of Lola's policy in Bavaria, and it would have been a strange scene if they had met. He left Rotterdam, however, by a different boat.

What happened in Bavaria after Lola left was this. The news of the Paris revolution of February 24th, when Louis Philippe was overthrown and a Republic was proclaimed, spread with lightning speed over Europe, and produced quick results in other countries. Bavaria did not escape. Munich was in ferment. The popular demand was for the immediate calling together of the Chambers and the dismissal of Berks from the Ministry of the Interior. Ludwig tried now, too late, to be firm. He would convoke the Chambers, he said, but not until May; and he would not get rid of Berks. The popular reply was the erection of barricades in the streets of Munich. Though Ludwig now yielded to the extent of dismissing Berks, the palace was again surrounded by an armed mob, and the troops refused to take any action against the revolutionaries. Ludwig summoned the Chambers; but

somehow a rumour got about that Lola Montez had returned, and fresh rioting occurred. Ludwig attempted to appease his people by revoking his former favourite's naturalisation and forbidding her ever to return. Then, in disgust, on March 21st, he abdicated in favour of his son Maximilian Joseph. The rest of his life he spent as a private citizen, both in Munich, where he became quite popular again, and in Italy and the South of France. He died at Nice in February, 1868.

. . . . .

The story of Lola Montez as the Dominant Woman is finished. She "hooked" no more princes, and she took no further part in politics. The remainder of her life may be dealt with briefly.

On her arrival in London she was able to secure an engagement at Covent Garden, and was advertised to appear in "Lola Montez; ou la Comtesse pour une heure," founded on her experiences in Bavaria. The advertisement, however, was withdrawn, as it was thought that the Lord Chamberlain would refuse his licence. Her only appearance at Covent Garden was at a benefit to Edward Fitzball, the retiring manager. She was well received, but, as before in London, attacks upon her followed, saying that she was an impostor with regard to her name and nationality. It was now that she wrote to the papers the letter, part of which is quoted on p. 233, about being born at Seville in the year 1823, and about her mother being "married for the second time to an Irish gentleman, which, I suppose, is the cause of my being called Irish, and sometimes English, 'Betsy Watson,'

'Mrs. James,' etc. I beg leave to say that my name is Maria Dolores Porris Montez, and I have never changed my name."*

After this brief renewal of her stage career, Lola retired into private life. She must have been able to save a considerable sum of money in Munich. She now had rooms in Half Moon Street, and held a salon in the evening, which was frequented by many well-known people, mostly men. George Augustus Sala describes her at this period as a very handsome woman. Unfortunately, at the age of thirty-one she decided on a second marriage, the bridegroom being George Trafford Heald, of the Guards, who had just attained his majority. He was apparently much in love with her, but he had an aunt in Lincolnshire who had been his guardian and decidedly disapproved of the match. This lady, Miss Susan Heald, made it her business to inquire into Lola's antecedents. The results were disastrous. The wedding took place on July 19th, 1849. In August Lola was arrested on a charge of bigamy, Thomas James being still alive in India. Up to now she seems honestly to have believed that she was a divorced woman. She was released on £2,000 bail, which she decided to sacrifice, and went with Heald to Spain.

The marriage was not a happy one. Heald resigned his commission, and the couple wandered about Spain and France. They quarrelled frequently, and on one occasion she is alleged to have stabbed him. Finally, in 1855, he

* It may be noted that when she was elevated to the Bavarian nobility as the Countess of Lansfeld her original name appears in the register as Maria Dolores Porris y Montez. What she means by the allusion to the name "Betsy Watson" is not apparent.

was drowned while bathing in the Tagus. But she had left him before that, having decided to try her luck again on the stage, this time in America. She was in the United States at the end of 1851. She met with no success. Then, unwarned by her experience with men and regardless of the bigamy charge against her in England, soon after Heald's death she married again, her new husband being P. P. Hull, editor of *The San Francisco Whig*. This union lasted for a very short time, as she left Hull for a German doctor named Adler, who was devoted to sport. Adler was accidentally killed while out shooting, and Lola left America.

After a visit to Europe, she broke new ground by going to Australia and making a tour of the principal towns. She met with fair success, but had some disagreeable experiences also. At Ballarat she felt compelled to horsewhip Seekamp, editor of the local *Times*, for disparaging remarks on her character. As she wrote triumphantly afterwards, she made Seekamp decamp.

When her Australian tour was finished Lola returned to the United States, making a short stay in Paris on her journey. In America again the stage did not prove profitable to her,* and she turned lecturer. Perhaps the idea was suggested to her by the Rev. C. Chauncy Burr, who certainly helped her in the preparation of her lectures, on her own life, on famous women, and on a variety of other subjects—lectures, it may be added, of extremely little

* That she had some stormy times may be gathered from the Autobiography. "She had had the honour of horsewhipping hundreds of men whom she never knew, and never saw." Their offence was "filling the Press with a thousand anecdotes and rumours entirely unjust and false."

interest, except what may be derived from the imaginative two which are called her Autobiography.

In 1858 she published her *Arts of Beauty*, the appeal of which to modern women is doubtful. At the end of the year she was in Ireland, on the way to a lecture tour in England. Here a new aspect of her character began to appear, and when she returned to New York in 1860 she devoted herself to acts of charity, spending much time in visiting the outcast women in the Magdalen Asylum. She felt her end approaching, and she was not mistaken. Paralysis came upon her, and on January 17th, 1861, she died at the Asteria Sanatorium, New York, in her forty-third year, "sincerely penitent." Her friend and spiritual adviser at the end of her life, the Rev. F. L. Hawke, wrote: "If ever a repentant soul loathed past sin, I believe hers did." Six years later he published an apology for her, which he entitled: "Is not this a Brand plucked out of the Fire? The story of a penitent: Lola Montez."

. . . . .

What are we to make of such a character as Lola Montez? She seems not like one woman, but like several united in one body. If we could cut out the period of her domination in Bavaria, which lasted only from the end of 1846 to February, 1848, she would be much easier to understand. Then we should see her, after an innocent girlhood and a tragic matrimonial experience (she was very unlucky in most of the men she met) lapse into a loose life, fostered by her triumphant beauty and by her constant failures on the stage; for only at Warsaw did she achieve a real success. We should see her with indomitable

courage and a fiery temper, which drove her into violent outbursts of ear-boxing and horsewhipping, overcome obstacle after obstacle, until, at a comparatively early age, and apprehensive of the approach of a premature death, she devoted herself to good deeds, dying in the odour of sanctity, like many loose women before her.

But there is the Bavarian episode, which stands out in startling contrast to the rest of her life. How could Lola Montez, with her past behind her and such future as she had to come, show herself so able a politician as to turn a notoriously conservative and reactionary kingdom like Bavaria into Liberal paths, commanding the respect, if not always the approval, of the statesmen with whom she came in contact? Only her bitterest foes could maintain that her rule was not good and free from corruption. She obtained handsome gifts from King Ludwig, it is true, to keep up her position; but no instance is adduced of her abusing her wealth or influence to promote unworthy people.

The writer on her life in *The Dictionary of National Biography* says that her abilities were considerable, she had a strong will and a grasp of circumstances, her disposition was generous, and her sympathies large. She ruled Bavaria with wisdom.*

Then the Bavarian episode came to an end, and it was as if it had never occurred—except that she was willing to exploit her experiences on the stage, were she allowed.

* That she took her position seriously is evident. G. H. Francis, whom we have quoted above, describes her as having her mornings occupied with innumerable letters to be dealt with by her and her secretaries, and as having agents and correspondents in various European Courts. She was also in constant attendance at the palace, to consult with the King and his ministers.

Lola Montez merely relapsed into what she had been before, a woman of no importance. Of her above all her sex the words of Horace might be used, *Nemo fuit unquam tam impar sibi*—No (woman) was ever so dissimilar to herself.

CHAPTER XI

"THE OLD BUDDHA"

In the autumn of 1928 it was reported from Peking that a party of Manchu nobles, visiting the Eastern Hills, eighty miles distant from the city, received a shock so severe that they broke down and wept bitterly.

Stories had reached Peking that the Imperial tombs in the Eastern Hills, last resting-place of members of the Ta Tsing ("Great Pure") dynasty which ruled China until the Revolution deposed it in 1912, had been violated and robbed of their buried treasures. The Manchu nobles came to see whether these stories were true.

They were only too true. Robbers had evidently been at work among the tombs and left ruin behind. But the most tragic sight of all was in front of a splendid mausoleum. On the ground lay an open coffin, and on the lid the discoloured naked body of an old woman, only partly covered by a tattered yellow pall, embroidered with the Chinese Imperial dragon in gold.

Well might the nobles, kinsmen, perhaps, some of them, of the fallen rulers of China, weep. Only nineteen years before, this same coffin had been carried under a catafalque upheld by eighty-four bearers, out of the "Forbidden City," where the Empress lived, over the streets of the Tartar City, strewn with yellow sand, and so to the open

country towards the Eastern Hills. A great procession of princes, nobles, statesmen and priests accompanied it, under escort of troops; and the representatives of the foreign Powers paid their last respects to it at the gates of Peking.

The funeral cost from two to three hundred thousand pounds. The mausoleum took more than a million to build, and its future occupant in her lifetime made many journeys to it to satisfy herself that it was being kept in order for the day when she should be borne to it for burial. Her interest in her tomb was immense.

But far more costly than the funeral or the tomb had been the jewels and other treasures within the coffin, estimated to have been worth no less than six and a quarter million pounds. The mattress of gold thread, seven inches thick, on which the dead woman lay, was alone worth £10,500, and the pearls and precious stones with which it was adorned £112,500. The pearl-embroidered jacket and the ropes of pearls, one of which went nine times round the body, were valued at £1,500,000; the pearl head-dress at £1,250,000; and so on, until the vast sum already given is reached—which does not include many gifts from Manchu princes and others.*

Never had there been a body interred with such splendour of treasure. The robbers took all. Some of the pearls were soon recovered from dealers in Peking. Whether any large portion of the rest will ever be found is doubtful. The reburial of the poor corpse was ordered at

* The estimate is from the unpublished diary of Li Lien-Ying, the celebrated eunuch of the Empress Dowager, as revealed by his grand-nephew Li Ying-Chow, and quoted by the Shanghai correspondent of *The Times* last year.

the expense of the ex-Emperor of China, grand-nephew of the proud woman who had shown such forethought as to her tomb, the most magnificent in all the Eastern Hills: Tze-hi, commonly called among her loyal admirers by the irreverent but affectionate nickname of "The Old Buddha."

. . . . .

In the days of the "Boxer" Rebellion and for some time after, that is to say in the early years of the present century, it was not an uncommon thing for writers having a bowing acquaintance with Chinese history to compare the Empress Dowager Tze-hi with two prominent women in the past history of her country; and usually it was not intended to convey a compliment by this comparison.* These were the Empresses Lu, of the Han dynasty, and Wu, of the T'ang dynasty, both of whom usurped the throne to the detriment of the rightful occupants. But only part of the sting of the comparison lay in the fact of usurpation. There were worse implications.

Lu was the wife of the successful military adventurer, Liu Pang, who founded the Han dynasty some two hundred years B.C., and ruled under the name of Kao Tu. When he died he left Lu as regent for their young son, who through her treatment of him died mad seven years later. She then reigned alone till her death in 180 B.C., gaining among Chinese historians a very bad reputation for cruelty.

Lu is rather shadowy as an historical character. Wu is more definite. T'ai Tsung, the great T'ang emperor, took her into his harem as a child; and when he died in A.D. 650

* The late Mrs. Archibald Little, for instance, in her *Life of Li Hung-chang*, spoke of the Empresses Lu and Wu as "arch-fiends." She was inclined to class Tze-hi with them.

his successor, Kao Tsung, fell completely under her sway, to the extent of allowing her to supplant and mutilate his principal wife, to take part in his councils from behind a veil, to find places everywhere for her favourites, and finally to claim equal rights with him, even that of performing the Imperial sacrifices at the Temple of Heaven. His feeble life ended in 683, when she refused to let the power pass to their son Chang Tsung. She established herself as first "Emperor" of a new dynasty, and was not driven from the throne until near her death, at the age of over eighty.

Professor R. Douglas proclaims Wu, in spite of the terrible cruelties attributed to her, one of the great characters of Chinese history, who ruled with vigour and success, and through her generals enlarged China, notably by the conquest of Korea.

It is curious that her son Chang Tsung, having at last escaped from his mother's tyranny, found in his wife Wei another woman bent on domination. His attempt to set himself free ended in his death by poison after five years of rule. Wei, however, did not live long to enjoy her position; for she perished in a revolution next year.

If, then, the Empress Tze-hi had desired to find precedents in her country's annals for women masterful enough to grasp at supreme power, she had two, or three, here. She might also, as she was a wide reader, see that for a woman to grasp at power unduly entailed certain penalties in the judgment of history.

. . . . .

Yehonala (for this was the original name of the Empress-to-be) was born in Peking's Tartar City in the summer of

1835. Her father was a man with no claims to fame, but a Bannerman—that is to say, a member of one of the eight "Banners" under which the Manchu conquerors of China were organised. Originally a fighting caste, the Bannermen had sunk to the condition of idlers, forbidden to engage in ordinary work, and living on the dole allowed to them by the Government. In her father's house Yehonala had no advantages of wealth or education.

However, as a Bannerman's daughter, she had the privilege of being registered, at the age of fifteen, among the candidates for the Imperial harem. Having good looks, she was taken by the selection committee and sent to the palace as Imperial concubine of the fifth, or lowest, rank. There was no disgrace attached to this at the Court of Peking; but she was one of a multitude to whom only chance could bring advancement.

Chance came her way. The young Emperor, Hien-fung, who had recently ascended the throne, cast his eyes upon her and was attracted. Rapid promotion up the ranks of concubines followed, until at last she was second lady of the palace.

Yehonala's looks, it has been said, were good. She was small—about five feet high—but gracefully built, with fine complexion and hair, of both of which she took great care throughout her life, not without the plentiful use of cosmetics and dye as she grew older. After entering the palace she industriously made up for the deficiencies of her early education, with the aid of her natural intelligence and an excellent memory, which counted much in the old system of Chinese learning.

Another great asset was her charm of manner, to which

Tze-hi, Empress Dowager of China.
From a photograph.

many Western observers bore witness in later years. But what above all brought her favour with the Emperor was that she bore him a son. Hien-fung's first wife had died childless, before he came to the throne. His first concubine, who was raised to the position of Imperial consort and is known to history as the Empress Tze-an, had no son. But Yehonala, at the age of twenty, provided an heir to the throne. She could not, by the laws of etiquette, take precedence over Tze-an. She was, however, given the title of Empress of the Western Palace, Tze-an being Empress of the Eastern. Strange to say, the two women contrived to live in peace with one another for twenty-five years more, without a quarrel sufficient to agitate the harem. Tze-an's placid nature must have contributed much to this happy state of affairs. She evidently bore no grudge against the rival who had given her husband a son.

The two Empresses had not long to wait before their position became vastly more important. Hien-fung, an indolent and dissolute young man, not troubling himself about the government of his country, left it in the hands of incompetent elderly relatives, who embroiled China with both England and France. The Allies took Canton and Tientsin, and finally, in the summer of 1860, marched on Peking. Hien-fung and his whole Court fled to Jehol, a hundred miles north-east of the capital. This was Yehonala's first experience of exile. She was to have another and much worse experience of it before her death.

The hardships of Jehol killed Hien-fung, who passed away in August, 1861. His baby son succeeded him, with a council of regency, made up of Imperial clansmen, to manage or mismanage affairs of State. But before three

months had passed this council had disappeared. The woman of dominant mind asserted herself. Taking with her Tze-an, she went to Prince Kung, brother of the late Emperor, and alleged that the regents were planning to put them, and Kung himself, to death and so consolidate their own supremacy.

Whether the story was true or not no one knows. Prince Kung, at any rate, put himself at the service of his sisters-in-law, and backed them with his troops. By a ruse the Great Seal was stolen, and edicts were issued in the infant Emperor's name, degrading the regents and appointing the two Empresses and Kung in their place. Peking bowed to the Great Seal and to the force of Kung's army ; and the *coup d'état* was accomplished, three of the ex-regents being executed.

Yehonala, or Tze-hi, as from this time she was called, was twenty-six when she became co-regent. She had forty-seven more years of life to run, during which she never lost her grip on public affairs, whether behind the scenes, as so long she was compelled to remain, or in the centre of the stage, where eventually she succeeded in placing herself. Very often her influence can only be guessed ; but guess cannot be wide of the mark, in view of what is known of her personality.

Little things show the growth of her power. Less than four years after the *coup d'état* an edict dismissed Prince Kung from office. He had shown a lack of respect for the Empresses, it was stated. He was forgiven and restored to office, but never again had the same power, though a man of ability and esteemed by foreigners with whom he came in contact. As a counterpoise to Kung, Tze-hi took

up his younger brother, Prince Chun, whom foreigners liked much less, and induced him to marry one of her sisters. From this union sprang the unhappy Emperor Kwang-hsu, the Reformer, in whose life Tze-hi played so tyrannical a part.

The principle of counterpoise was one of Tze-hi's most effective weapons. During her son's minority she made the acquaintance of the greatest of all Chinese of recent times, Li Hung-chang, who, with General Gordon's help, had suppressed the calamitous "Taiping" rebellion, and subsequently by his diplomacy saved his country from disaster after the Tientsin massacre of 1870. Tze-hi marked him out for promotion, and, as he was a proper Chinese, not a Manchu, made him her protection against the undue influence of her own race. Li Hung-chang became her most devoted servant, and remained so to the end of his days.

At the New Year of 1873, Tze-hi's son, having attained his official majority and taken a wife, began his reign, under the title of Tung-chih. The Dowager Empresses retired into private life for a while. But that they watched affairs was shown very clearly by the fact that, when one day the Emperor issued an edict degrading Prince Kung and his son for using unbecoming language to him, another edict appeared in which the Dowagers, in their own names, reinstated the princes; and no protest came from Tung-chih.

Very soon after Tung-chih was dead. There was no real justification for suspecting foul play. It was smallpox which caused his end. Tze-hi's enemies, however, have charged her with this death among many others. Whether

they believed so monstrous an accusation was true is another matter.

As Tung-chih had no son,* the question of the succession arose as soon as it was known that he was dying. The Empresses, or rather Tze-hi, had an answer ready. She did not want Prince Kung's son upon the throne—for one reason because it meant less influence for herself. But there was Prince Chun, who had married her sister; and their son was only four years old. This promised a long regency. And who would be more suitable regents than the two Empresses who had acted during Tung-chih's minority?

Tze-hi's plans were laid, and Li Hung-chang's aid was invoked. He was Viceroy of Chihli province, and had an army at his command He marched with four thousand men to Peking, and surrounded the Forbidden City as soon as Tung-chih was dead. Meanwhile Tze-hi went to Prince Chun's house, fetched her nephew out of his bed—for it was night, and a night of snow, we are told—wrapped him up, and carried him in her chair to the palace. Next morning the Imperial clansmen were confronted with an alleged will by Tung-chih and a ready-made Emperor, for whom the Empresses were to be regents. Protest was useless. Tze-hi's second *coup d'état* had succeeded.

It was January, 1875, so that Tze-hi was in her fortieth year when, for the second time, she became co-regent with Tze-an for an infant. In another six years (which were of considerable importance to China, but of less to

* The legend hostile to Tze-hi makes Tung-chih leave his wife Ahluta pregnant, and attributes her death some two months later to poison administered by her mother-in-law. With regard to this tale it may be noted that Ahluta's father continued to serve the Empress Dowager faithfully.

Tze-hi's story) she was sole regent. Tze-an was dead. Again we hear in some quarters the suggestion of foul play; again without real justification as far as we can see. Tze-hi had no reason for wishing to get rid of her amiable partner in authority. It has been looked on as suspicious that soon after Tze-an's death Tze-hi removed Prince Kung from office, never to employ him again. The assumption is that Tze-an had been the obstacle which prevented her co-regent from removing the Prince. But it is not proved that Tze-an specially favoured Kung. On the other hand, Tze-hi undoubtedly favoured Kung's brother Chun, her sister's husband and father of the Emperor. All that can be said for certain is that she took advantage of being now sole regent to replace Kung by Chun as chief representative of the Manchus in her administration. Among the Chinese she wisely continued to rely on Li Hung-chang.

Nearly six years passed after Tze-an's death, and the Emperor Kwang-hsu reached his majority. But Tze-hi did not feel at all inclined to hand over the reins to her nephew, as she ought to do, at the New Year of 1888. Kwang-hsu was not strong enough yet to do anything against his masterful aunt. She forced him to issue an edict, expressing dismay at the idea of ruling alone, and begging her to continue her regency. Moreover, she constrained him to accept as his first wife a daughter of one of her brothers, named like herself Yehonala, who was entirely under her influence. Kwang-hsu was most unwilling, having his affection set elsewhere, but he gave way. As a consolation he was allowed to take the lady of his choice as first concubine.

At last in February, 1889, when she was fifty-four years

of age, Tze-hi could no longer find any excuse for keeping Kwang-hsu out of his own; and for the second time she nominally gave up all control of affairs, and went into retirement. She chose as her home the beautiful Iho Park, twelve miles outside Peking, and there for nine years devoted herself to her various hobbies—flowers and animals (including the Pekingese dog), painting, building, boating on the lake, and the theatre, for which she was always a great enthusiast. But she refused to abandon all power. She insisted on seeing State documents and having high official appointments submitted to her for approval. It was even alleged that she kept the Great Seal in her possession.

For nine years she remained in the background. Then she made a startling reappearance. The unhappy Kwang-hsu was a victim of external circumstances and his own idealism. China's ruinous war with Japan in 1894, followed by the encroachments of the European robber Powers, as the Chinese very justifiably considered those who deprived them of all their best harbours, made the country bitterly discontented and anti-foreign. This was very poor soil for the Emperor's ideas of the reform of China on Western lines. But in his ardour he would listen to no words of caution. He roused the conservative tradition of old China against him, and at that time the result was inevitable.

Kwang-hsu certainly went too fast; but the sound parts of his programme made the most powerful enemies. The crisis came in 1898, when the Emperor, in his retrenchment of public offices, applied the axe to the venerable Board of Rites. The six principal officials hastened to the

Iho Palace, and implored Tze-hi to return to Peking and resume control of affairs.

Though the Iho Palace had long been the resort of all with a grievance against the Emperor, Tze-hi hesitated, or appeared to hesitate. Even the dismissal of Li Hung-chang from his post on the Grand Council did not at once stir her. But finally it came to her ears that her nephew was about to put out of the way Yunglu—another nephew, and a great favourite of hers, who by her influence had become Viceroy of Chihli province—and to have her arrested. Did Kwang-hsu really contemplate such a scheme? That he was urged to it we can well believe. The Reform party were bent on Yunglu's destruction, and the extremists among them were quite ready to include the Empress Dowager in his doom. No old-fashioned Chinese reverence for the "August Ancestress" influenced them.

The story goes that the scheme was confided to Yuan Shi-kai, actual commander of the Peking Field Forces under Yunglu, and later first President of the Chinese Republic. The Emperor thought he could trust Yuan; but Yuan went with the news to Yunglu, and Yunglu to the Empress Dowager. She acted with her customary vigour in a crisis. Getting into a sedan chair, and escorted only by a guard of eunuchs, she was carried from the Iho Palace to Peking, made her way into the Forbidden City, entered the palace, heaped reproaches on her nephew, and struck him with her fan.

The Emperor crumpled up. No one came to help him, and the Peking Field Forces dominated the situation outside the palace. Tze-hi's third *coup d'état* was accomplished. She made Kwang-hsu issue an edict that he had

at last persuaded her to associate herself with him in the government again, and follow this with other edicts ordering the execution of his friends and withdrawing almost the whole of his Reform programme.

Henceforward Kwang-hsu was a melancholy prisoner. It was rumoured that there was a design to put him to death; but this at least he was spared.

Thus in the autumn of 1898 the Empress Dowager was once more the ruler of China. She had now a much more difficult situation to handle than before, and she handled it ill. The country was in a full tide of reaction, and the foreign Powers aggravated matters by continual demands for fresh concessions. Any means of relief from the hated foreigners seemed welcome. Now Tze-hi, for all her force of character, was a very superstitious woman. When there came forward the leaders of a secret society, the *I Ho Chüan*, commonly known to the West as the "Boxers," who claimed to work miracles and promised to drive the foreigners into the sea, she listened to them and let them try what they could do. The results were the murder in the streets of Peking of the German Minister, Baron von Ketteler, the eight weeks' siege of the Legations in the summer of 1900, the entry of the Allied troops into Peking, and the flight of the Court for seven hundred miles to distant Sianfu, an ancient capital of China, leaving all their possessions behind them, including Tze-hi's wonderful jewels. The fugitives raced across country in the utmost discomfort, and short even of food.

The Empress Dowager, seeing how futile were the Boxers' pretensions, had lost heart before the flight; but she did not lose her wits. Li Hung-chang, though nearly

eighty years old, was entrusted with the task of getting China out of her troubles as he had before. He did so again, at a tremendous price. In money alone China was compelled to promise an indemnity of sixty-seven and a half million pounds. Many marks of humiliation were inflicted on her. But peace was made. It was Li Hung-chang's last service to his mistress; for before the end of 1901 he was dead. His only regret is said to have been that he could not live to see "The Old Buddha" once again.

On January 7th, 1902, the Court returned to the desecrated and looted Forbidden City, after an exile of sixteen months. The Empress Dowager had celebrated her sixty-seventh birthday (according to Chinese reckoning) on the journey back from Sianfu, which took three months. The last section of it, from the Chihli frontier, was covered by railway—a strange method of conveyance for her who had not long ago seemed entirely in sympathy with the violently anti-foreign party! But Tze-hi was now all anxiety to show that she was by no means anti-foreign. She seemed in excellent spirits as she re-entered Peking, gaily decorated to receive her, and smiled, nodded, and shook her hands in friendly fashion to any ladies whom she recognised among the Western spectators standing on the city walls to watch her return.

Henceforward she seemed a changed woman. She, as well as the Emperor, received the foreign representatives in audience at the palace, and she received them sitting openly on the throne, for the first time in Chinese history. She entertained foreign ladies and children to tea, and bestowed on them handsome presents. But she went much further. Not only did she openly express approval

of Western culture, but she began to introduce a Reform programme, which was better than Kwang-hsu's, because more gradual. In particular, she dealt with education, the organisation of the Government departments, and the removal of such abuses as opium-smoking, and foot-binding among women—which was never a Manchu custom, though dear to some of the Chinese. She ordered the Bannermen to earn their livings in future, and allowed the intermarriage of Manchus and Chinese. She even promised constitutional government for China, and ended by persuading many of her former bitter critics that she was really progressive.

In one respect, however, she showed little change of heart. She kept Kwang-hsu still entirely in the background, allowing him no share in the administration, nor indeed any freedom of action, watching him, it was said, as a cat watches a mouse. Under her treatment his health grew worse and worse, until it was clear to all who saw him that he had not long to live. But neither now had she; and, strangely, nephew and aunt died within twenty-four hours of one another.

In November, 1908, both were very ill; Kwang-hsu a neurasthenic wreck with a complication of diseases, and Tze-hi suffering from what appeared to be a temporary congestion of the brain. On the 14th of the month the Emperor's tragic life came to an end. The following day Tze-hi, who had had a paralytic stroke on the 12th, in the words of the obituary edict "took the Dragon Ride and ascended to the Far Country."

She had already, long before, arranged for the succession to the throne. The new Emperor was to be the infant son

of Kwang-hsu's young brother, Prince Chun (Tsaifeng), who had married a daughter of her beloved nephew Yunglu; and the Prince himself was to be regent. As we know now, her provision for the future government of China was brought to naught in 1912, less than four years after her death, when the Revolution swept away the little Emperor Hsuan-tung and the Regent Chun together, and set up a Republic where the Ta Tsings had ruled.

Tze-hi, when she died, was seventy-three according to Western, seventy-four according to Chinese, reckoning. For the greater part of her life she may be said to have justified the encomium of one of her loyal admirers: "A woman with the courage of a man and more than the ordinary man's intelligence." This is a Chinese verdict. A Western one, that of the late Alexander Michie, finds the bases of her character "clearness of purpose, strength of will, a ready accommodation of means to end, and frank acceptance of the inevitable."

Her judgment of men is borne witness to by her discovery, and unfailing support, of Li Hung-chang; and, in a lesser degree, by her selection of Prince Chun the elder, who was a better and abler man than his foreign critics allowed; Yuan Shi-kai, and many others, not excluding Yunglu, who was also much better than he was painted. It was very decidedly called in question by the confidence she reposed in, and licence she allowed to, her head eunuch Li Lien-ying, corrupt and venal, the amasser of an immense fortune and wielder of entirely illegal political power. That is to say, eunuchs were debarred from interference in politics under the rule of the Manchu dynasty in China. They had crept back in the reign of Tze-hi's feeble husband; but

under her their influence had so increased that the bad times of the later Ming rulers, predecessors of the Manchus, were recalled. The failure of her judgment was also shown by her trust, if only temporary, in Prince Tuan, patron of the "Boxers"; and by her use of various other men who seem to us entirely unworthy of the positions which she assigned to them. But perhaps this is an example of her "accommodation of means to end." Such men may have appeared to her appropriate tools for the work to be done. It was not work for high-souled men.

Her chief failings were her lust of power; her greed for money (she is said to have diverted the Admiralty funds to the rebuilding and furnishing of the Summer Palace); her superstition (which, however, says Mr. J. O. P. Bland, was seldom allowed by her to turn her from any line of action dictated by her private interests or by public policy); her vindictiveness; and her violent temper—for, with all her charm of manner and general appearance of amiability, her rages are described as "awful to witness."

Her vindictiveness cannot be questioned when we consider her treatment of her nephew Kwang-hsu. It is difficult to fathom the reason why it was so bitter, except that he dared attempt to shake off her authority. He was her sister's son, and she was reputed very kind to her blood relations. But he struck at the power to which she so clung. And, of course, it was rumoured that he was willing to make a prisoner of her, if not to put her entirely out of the way. Still, her revenge was very cruel.

Tze-hi's enemies imputed to her numerous murders and a very licentious disposition. We have seen that there were charges of murder even in the cases of her son, her

daughter-in-law, Ahluta, and her co-regent and old friend, Tze-an. A later and more generally believed accusation was she caused the death of the " Pearl Concubine," beloved of Kwang-hsu, whom she was said to have caused to be thrown down a well when the Court fled from Peking in 1900, because she had pleaded for Kwang-hsu two years previously, and now at last there was a convenient opportunity to get rid of her. But the murder charges are, and were at the time when they were made, exceedingly difficult to investigate. Some were obviously inspired by a bitter hatred of the Empress Dowager. Not proven seems the appropriate verdict on others.

Where her political prejudices were aroused, however, she was utterly ruthless. The executions of Reformers after the *coup d'état* of 1898 might be called " judicial murders," though she may have had good reason for imagining what would have been her fate had the Young China party triumphed. There is no doubt what would have happened to the Reformers whom she excepted from the amnesty at the official celebration of her seventieth birthday, six years later. She was then herself a preacher of Reform; but she had not forgiven Kang Yu-wei, Liang Chi-chao, and Sun Yat-sen for the past. Fortunately for them, they were able to keep out of her clutches. Does it not say something for her prescience, however, that part of the ruin of modern China must be attributed to Sun Yat-sen?

As for her alleged sexual licence, there is no real evidence. Accusations of the kind are almost inevitable where a woman ruler with countless enemies is concerned. A favourite tale among the Chinese was that the eunuch

Li Lien-ying was not what he was supposed to be. Such insinuations are easy to make.*

The Empress Dowager was not, apart from her fondness for dress and jewellery, very luxurious in her life. She was not devoted to the pleasures of the table, and if she indulged in opium never smoked it to excess.

Her favourite doctrine is said to have been that of the Happy Mean. She certainly did not carry it out in all things. But it is a hard doctrine to follow, especially on a throne—and that the Imperial throne of China!

* Not all Western visitors to Peking were condemnatory of Li Lien-ying. Miss Katharine Carl, the American artist, describes him as Savanarola-like, elegant, pleasant-voiced, and having an appearance of ability. It is true Miss Carl was rather an enthusiast about those whom she met at the palace.

EPILOGUE

"WOMEN," wrote Miss Virginia Woolf the other day, "what is the truth about them? Why have men always had power and wealth and influence and fame—while women have had nothing but children."

Well, looking back on the women whom we have had under notice in the preceding pages, we can hardly say that their strong suit has been children. On the other hand, they have had "power and wealth and influence and fame." They have had these from remote antiquity; and, in this year of grace, can we say that they have not still a very considerable share of them? As regards "nothing but children," has not the name of Malthus been eclipsed by that of a lady with the same initial and same terminal letter?

Let us be fair, ladies! You have not been merely paidotrophic. You have had a good portion of the other things as well.

Besides, have not men had a little to do with the perpetuation of the human race? And who wrote "To his dear son, Gervase"?

Dear Lord, receive my son, whose winning love
To me was like a friendship, far above
The course of nature or his tender age;
Whose looks could all my bitter grief assuage.
Let his pure soul, ordain'd seven years to be
In that frail body which was part of me,
Remain my pledge in Heaven, as sent to show
How to this port at every step I go.*

No, Miss Woolf, it is not the case that women have nothing but children; nor do women alone have children.

FINIS

* Sir John Beaumont.

INDEX

A

Abel, Carl von, 242, 243, 244, 245
Acacius, 78*n*
Afzal Khan, 114
Agrippina the Elder, 22
Agrippina the Younger, 21, 22–3
Ahluta, 266*n*
Ahmad Shāh Durrāni, 142
Akbar, 116
Alaric, 30, 90
Alençon, François de Valois, Duke of, 99–100
Alexander the Great, 15, 16
Alexander Helios, 45, 52, 57
Alexander, Tsarevitch, 228, 230
Alexianus (afterwards Emperor Alexander Severus), 26, 28–30, 61
Alexis, Tsar, 209
Alexis, Tsarevitch, 210
Amalasuntha, 90–1
Ambikabai, 122, 123
Anastasius, Emperor, 32–3, 87
Anglesea, Earl of, 146
Anhalt-Zerbst, Prince Peter Christian of, 218–9
Anhalt-Zerbst, Princess Jeanne-Elizabeth of, 218–9, 220
Anna Ivanovna, 213–5, 217
Anna Leopoldovna, 214–6, 217
Anne (Boleyn), Queen, 82–3, 95–6, 97, 100, 108, 109
Anne, Princess, afterwards Queen, 178, 193–4, 195*ff*, 200*ff*
Antonina, wife of Belisarius, 85, 89
Antoninus Pius, 23, 62
Antony (Marcus Antonius), 21, 37, 38, 43–51, 53, 57, 59
Apama, 18–9
Arcadius, Emperor, 30
Ariadne, 31–2
Arrhidæus, 16
Arlington, Henry Bennett, Earl of, 153, 155, 158, 170, 172
Arlington, Countess of, 166
Arsinoe, 40, 44, 52
Artavasdes, 46
Artaxerxes, 61, 65
Artemisia of Halicarnassus, 15
Ashley, Mrs. Catherine, 109–110
Aspasia, 20*n*
Ataulphus, 30
Atossa, 14–5
Augustus. *See* Octavian
Aurangzeb, 114, 115, 116, 118, 120, 121, 122, 124–5
Aurelian, Emperor, 70–5
Aurelius, Marcus, Emperor, 23, 24, 86*n*
Azīm Shāh, 125

B

Bājīrao, Peshwā, 129, 130, 137
Bālajī Vishvanāth, Peshwā, 127–8, 129
Bālājī II, Peshwā, 130, 132, 133–4, 136, 138, 139–43
Barillon, French ambassador, 175, 177, 180, 185
Basiliscus, 31
Bassian family, The, 24–30
Bayning, Mary (afterwards Lady Grandison and Countess of Anglesea), 146
Beauclerc, Charles (afterwards Duke of St. Albans), 173, 184, 204

Beaufort, Duke of, 161
Belisarius, 83, 84, 85, 88, 91
Bennett, Henry. *See* Arlington
Berenike, daughter of Magas, 18–19
Berenike, daughter of Ptolemy XIII, 38
Berkeley, Sir Charles, 151, 153
Berks, 246, 251
Bhavānibai, 126, 131
Biron, Ernst Johann, 213–4, 225
Blandford, Charles, Marquis of, 197
Blount, Charles, 104
Boadicea, 34–6
Boleyn, Anne. *See* Anne
Britannicus, 22
Buckinghan, George Villiers, 2nd Duke of, 155–8, 160, 163–4, 165, 177
Burnet, Bishop, 179*n*, 185, 186, 204, 206*n*
Burr, Rev. C. Chauncy, 232*n*, 254

C

Cæsar, Julius, 38, 39–42, 43, 44, 54
Cæsarion, 41, 42, 52
Caligula, Emperor, 57
Calpurnia, 41
Caracalla, Emperor, 25, 26, 30, 61
Carey, Robert, 105–7
Castlemaine, Earl of. *See* Palmer, Roger
Castlemaine, Countess of. *See* Villiers, Barbara
Catherine I, Tsarina: not first Russian political princess, 208; her early days, 209; first mistress and then wife of Peter the Great, 210; her affair with Mons, 210; crowned as empress-consort, 211; her domination over Peter, 211–2; Tsarina regent, 212; her death, 212; makes Peter II her heir, 212
Catherine II, Tsarina: compared with Semiramis, 13; her difference from Queen Elizabeth, 108; a German princess, 218; invited to Russia, 219; becomes Russia's "second founder," 219; meets and is married to Peter III, 219–20; her dreary years at Court, 220–21; early intrigues, 221; asks to return home, 222; after Tsarina Elizabeth's death, 222; deposes Peter, who is murdered, 223; a real ruler of Russia, 224; favouritism under her, 224*ff*; Gregory Orloff, 225, 226, 229; Potemkin, 225, 226, 229–30; Zuboff, 226, 229; no mere sensualist, 226; her conduct towards her son, 227–8; towards her grandchildren, 227–8; illness and death, 228; much regretted, 228; the secret of her power, 229
Catherine (de Medici), Queen, 99, 100
Catherine (of Braganza), Queen, 149, 150–1, 156, 163, 168, 175
Catherine (Parr), Queen, 96
Cecil, William (afterwards Lord Burleigh), 95, 102
Charles II, King, 145, 147, 148*ff*, and Chapter VII *passim*
Chesterfield, Philip Stanhope, Earl of, 147
Chun (Yihwan), Prince, 265, 266, 267, 273
Chun (Tsaifeng), Prince, 273
Churchill, John (afterward Duke of Marlborough), 166–7, 170, 192*ff*, 200*ff*, 206
Clarendon, Edward Hyde, Earl of, 148, 149, 150, 153, 154–5, 156
Claudius I, Emperor, 21–22
Claudius II, Emperor, 69, 70, 71
Cleopatra the Great: her origin, 37; education, 38; becomes Queen of Egypt, 38; driven out by her brother's party, 38; meets Julius Cæsar, 40; becomes his mistress, 40; bears Cæsarion, 41; visits Rome, 41; flies after Cæsar's death, 42; end of her first romance, 42; meets Antony at Tarsus, 43;

has her sister Arsinoe assassinated, 44; receives Antony in Egypt, 44; bears twins to him, 45; the liaison temporarily ended, 45; renewed, 45; bears Antony another son, 45; at the Alexandrian triumph, 46; refuses to leave Antony, 47; at Actium, 47; back in Egypt, 48; her resolution, 48; overtures to Octavian, 49; preparation for suicide, 50; receives the dying Antony, 51; meets Octavian, 51; fears to be led in triumph, 52; poisons herself, 52; end of her second romance, 53; her ambition for an Eastern Empire, 53; her character, 52–3; her looks, 54; charm, 54; her descendants, 57
Cleopatra of Syria, 17
Cleopatra, wife of Ptolemy VII, 17–8
Cleopatra Selene, 45, 52, 57
Cleveland, Duchess of. *See* Villiers, Barbara
Colbert, French ambassador, 166, 167, 168
Comito, 79
Commodus, Emperor, 24
Constantine the Great, 29*n*, 30, 57
Constantine VII (Porphyrogenitus), 33
Constantine IX, 33–4
Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi, 20
Cornelia, wife of Pompey, 20
Cornbury, Lord, 149
Craigie, Captain, 233, 234–5
Cynane, 16
Cyrus the Great, 14

D

Dāmājī Gaikwār, 136–7
Dāmājī Gaikwār II, 137, 139–40
Danby, Thomas Osborne, Earl of, 170, 173, 174, 175, 176–7
Darius, 15
Darnley, Henry Stuart, Lord, 102, 110
D'Augoult, Comtesse, 237
Davis, Mary, 157
De Beauvallon, 240
De Bussy, 141–2
Decius, Emperor, 64
Demetrius the Fair, 18
Devonshire, Edward Courtenay, Earl of, 100
Dio Cassius, 35
Diocletian, Emperor, 76
Dryden, John, 21, 53, 177
Dudley, Lord Robert, 101–103
Dujarier, 240
Dumas, Alexandre, 240

E

Eden, Hon. Emily, 234
Edward VI, King, 96, 97
Elagabalus (Marcus Aurelius Antoninus), Emperor, 26–9
Elizabeth, Queen: great, not good, 94; a Tudor, 94, 95*n*; her attitude towards women, 95, 109–10; towards men, 95, 107–9; her breeding, 95–6; upbringing, 96–7; compromised by Thomas Seymour, 96–7; precarious position under Mary, 97; becomes Queen, 97; her hand as political asset, 97*ff*; her princely suitors, 98–100; the Duke of Alençon, 99–100; her flirtations with her subjects, 100*ff*; Lord Robert Dudley, 101–3; an alleged son, 101; her favourites must not marry, 102, 104, 110; her relations with Essex, 103–5; has Essex executed, 105; her friendship with her kinsman Carey, 105–6; her last illness, 106; death, 106–7; her "uncompleted womanhood," 107–8; her physical decay, 108; Mary Stuart's letter, 109; her treatment of Lady Catherine Grey and Arabella Stuart, 110–11; a woman extraordinary and in many ways unique, 111
Elizabeth, Tsarina: a daughter of Peter the Great, 213; her

obscure early life, 214; in disgrace for an affair, 214–5; her liaison with Razumovsky, 215, 216, 218, 225; concerned in a plot, 215; seizes the regent Anna, and is made Tsarina, 216; tyrannical, but with a soft side, 216; has favourites, 216–7, 225; heavy eater and drinker, 217; a builder, 217; her reign good for Russia, 217; her choice of Peter (III) as heir, 218; sends for Catherine (II), 218–9; marries Peter to Catherine, 220; keeps them in bondage, 220; brings up Catherine's children, 221; her death, 222
Eugenia, 80
Euphemia, 89
Eurydice, 16
Eutychianus, 27
Essex, Robert Devereux, Earl of, 103–5
Essex, Lettice (Knollys), Countess of, 102, 110
Evelyn, John, 154, 161, 163, 165, 166, 171, 184, 186

F

Faustina the Elder, 23
Faustina the Younger, 23, 24
Feilding, Robert, 188–9
Firdusi, 65
"Fitzroy," Barbara, 166–7, 189, 193
Fitzroy, Charles (after Duke of Southampton), 150, 164, 170
Fitzroy, George (afterwards Duke of Northumberland), 164, 182
Fitzroy, Henry (afterwards Duke of Grafton), 151, 164, 170
Francis, G. H., 246–7, 256*n*
Frederick the Great, 217, 219, 222
Fulvia, 21, 44, 47

G

Gallienus, Emperor, 66–7, 69, 71
George (of Denmark), Prince, 183, 194, 198, 199, 200
George I, King, 204
Gilbert, Lieutenant Edward, 232-3
Gilbert, Mrs. (afterwards Mrs. Craigie), 232–4
Gilbert, Marie Dolores. *See* Montez, Lola
Goodman, Cardonell, 184, 188
Gordon, General, 12, 265
Grandison, William Villiers, Lord, 146
Grey, Lady Catherine, 110–11
Grimm, Baron M. von, 226, 228*n*
Gwynn, Nell, 157, 171, 172, 173, 175, 180, 181, 184, 186

H

Hadrian, Emperor, 60, 61
Hairanes, 63, 68
Halifax, Lord, 164*n*
Hall, Jacob, 159
Hamilton, Charles, 189
Hamilton, George, 151, 192
Hamilton, James, Earl of Arran, 98, 101
Hamilton, Lady Emma, 36
Hamilton, Sir William, 36
Harley, Robert, 200
Hart, Charles, 157
Hawke, Rev. F. L., 255
Heald, George Trafford, 253–4
Hecebolus, 79
Henrietta Maria, Queen, 152, 158
Henrietta, Princess, Duchess of Orleans, 159–60, 162–3
Henry VIII, 94, 95, 96, 107
Herbert, Lady Charlotte, 184, 187
Hill, Abigail, 198*ff*
Hien-fung, Emperor, 262–3, 273
Holstein, Peter Ulric of. *See* Peter II
Honorius, Emperor, 30
Hsuan-tung, Emperor, 260, 273
Huddleston, Father John, 185
Hull, P. P., 254
Hunsdon, Henry Carey, Lord, 95, 105
Hypatius, 87–88

I

Illus, 31–32
Ivan V, 209, 213
Ivan VI, 214, 216, 218, 224

J

James I, King, 106, 107, 110
James, Duke of York (afterwards James II), 146, 152, 153, 157–8, 167, 168, 172, 174, 178, 179, 182–3, 185, 186, 192, 193, 194–5
James Francis Edward, Prince of Wales, 203
James, Lieutenant Thomas, 233–4, 235, 253
Jeffreys, John, 187
Jennings, Frances (afterwards Duchess of Tyrconnel), 191–2, 195, 206*n*
Jennings, Richard, 191
Jennings, Mrs., 191–2
Jennings, Sarah (afterwards Duchess of Marlborough): a double story, 191; her origin, 191; a maid of honour, 192; in love with John Churchill, 192; married to him, 193; meets the Princess Anne, 193; becomes "Mrs. Freeman," 194; her Protestantism, 195, 203; deserts James II, 195; sees Anne become Queen, 196; her political genius, 197; is bored with Queen Anne, 198; supplanted by Abigail Hill, 199*ff*; disgusts the Queen, 201; their last interview, 201–2; her political reign ended, 203; return to England under George I, 203; loses her husband, 204; her fighting old age, 204; death, 205; Pope's character of her, 205; her love-story with "John, Duke of Marlborough," 206–7
Jijābai, 129, 142
Jingo Kógo, Empress, 13–14
John of Cappadocia, 88–90
Juba, 57
Julia Domna, 24–26
Julia Mæsa, 24, 25–9
Julia Mamæa, 26, 28–30
Julia Soæmias, 26, 27–9
Justin, Emperor, 79–81
Justinian, Emperor, 23, 76, 78, 80–1, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86*ff*, 93

K

Kām Baksh, 121
Katharine (of Aragon), Queen, 97
Kelly, Fanny, 235
Kéroualle, Louise de (afterwards Duchess of Portsmouth): comes to England, 160; her origin, 160–61; early days, 161–2; captivates Charles II, 162; maid of honour to Queen Catherine, 163–5; descriptions of her, 165; becomes royal mistress, 166; bears Charles a son, 166; made Duchess of Portsmouth, 168; her schemes, 168–9; her neutrality with the Duchess of Cleveland, 169–70; deferred to by the courtiers, 170; her ambition for her son, 171; upset by Madame Mazarin's arrival, 172; keeps her place, 173, 175; high in the King's councils, 177; her diplomacy during the "Popish Plot" agitation, 178–80; gets more money, 181; visits France 181–2; welcomed back by Charles, 182; one of the rulers of England, 183; the episode with the Grand Prior, 183; in Charles's last days, 184–5; Charles's dying words for, 186; goes to France, 186; revisits England, 187; her death, 187; her dominance, 190
Kéroualle family, The, 160–1
Kéroualle, Henriette de (afterwards Countess of Pembroke), 161, 169, 182, 184, 187
Kéroualle, Sebastien de, 161
Khanderao Dābhāde, 136–7
Killigrew, Harry, 146
Kung, Prince, 264, 265, 266, 267

Kwang-hsu, Emperor, 143–4, 265, 266*ff*, 272, 274, 275

L

Lampridius, 29*n*
Leicester, Earl of. *See* Dudley, Lord Robert
Lennox, Charles (afterwards Duke of Richmond and Lennox), 166, 170, 181, 186–7
Lennox, Captain, 235
Leo I, Emperor, 31
Leo VI, Emperor, 33
L'Estocq, 215
Li Hung-chang, 12, 265, 266, 267, 269, 270–71, 273
Li Lien-ying, 259*n*, 273, 276
Liszt, Franz, 237, 239
Lomer, Mrs., 234
Longinus, 64, 74
Louis XIV, King, 152, 158, 159, 162, 163, 166, 167, 168, 173, 174, 177, 180, 181–2, 183
Lu, Empress, 260
Ludwig I, King of Bavaria, 241*ff*, 248–30, 251–2, 256
Ludwig II, King, 241
Lumley, Sir Abraham, 233
Lumley, Benjamin, 236

M

Macrianus, 66
Macrinus, Emperor, 25–7
Mādhavrao, Peshwā, 143
Mæonius, 68
Magas of Cyrene, 18
Malmesbury, Lord, 236*n*
Mancini, Hortense, Duchess of Mazarin, 171–4, 175, 176, 181, 183, 184, 186, 188
Marcian, Emperor, 31
Marcus Aurelius Antoninus. *See* Aurelius.
Maria Fedorovna, Tsarina, 230
Marie-Beatrice, Queen (Mary of Modena), 168, 172, 192, 193, 196
Mary, Princess (afterwards Queen), 174, 178, 180, 194
Mary (Tudor), Queen, 95*n*, 97, 98, 100
Mary, Queen of Scots, 95, 102, 103, 109, 110
Masham, Samuel, 200
Masham, Mrs. *See* Hill, Abigail
Mausolus, 15
Menshikoff, Alexander, 209–10, 212
Messalina, 21–2
Metternick, Prince, 251
Mohammad Shāh, 129
Mohite, Hambirrao, 117, 124
Molina, Spanish Ambassador, 152, 153,
Monmouth, James, Duke of, 178, 179, 181, 185
Mons, Anna, 209–10
Montagu, Edward, 155
Montagu, Ralph, 164, 176
Montez, Lola (Marie Dolores Gilbert): a life in sections, 232; her origin, 232; her many tales, 232–3, 236*n*, 252–3; goes to India in childhood, 233; sent home, 233; elopes, 234; marries Thomas James, 234; goes back to India, 234; deserted, 234; leaves India again, 235; her divorce, 235, 253; becomes a dancer, 236; her failure in London, 236; hard times on the Continent, 237; her affair with Liszt, 237, 239; success in Warsaw, 238–9; expelled, 239; goes to Russia, 239; to Paris, 239; her affair with Dujarier, 240; "hooking a prince," 240–41; meets Ludwig I of Bavaria, 241–2; infatuates him, 242–3; made a countess, 244; her influence, 244–5; hostile demonstration against, 245; description of her life in 1847, 246–7; her students 247; another demonstration, 247; her threat, 248; abandoned by Ludwig, 248; told to leave Munich, 249; returns, 249; banished again, 249; treated for witchcraft, 250; in

Switzerland, 250–1; back in London, 252; marries G. T. Heald, 253; in America, 254; in Australia, 254; last days and death in America, 254–5; a complex of characters, 255–7
Mudhojī Bhonsle, 130, 132
Mulgrave, Earl of, 177

N

Nādír Shāh, 130
Narses, 91
Natalia, Tsarina, 209
Nelson, Horatio, Viscount, 36
Nero, Emperor, 22–23, 34, 35, 60
Nicholas I, Tsar, 239
Nicholas, Sir Edward, 153
Ninus, 13
Nitócris, 12
Nizām-ul-Mulk, 129, 136
Nizām, son of the preceding, 136, 141

O

Oates, Titus, 169*n*, 185*n*
Octavia, 44, 45–6, 47, 57
Octavian (after the Emperor Augustus), 21, 43, 44, 45–52, 54, 55, 57
Odænathus, 58, 63, 64, 65–8, 76
Olympias, 15–7
Orange, William, Prince of, 174, 180, 187, 188, 195–6
Orleans, Philippe, Duke of, 159, 162–3
Orleans, Duchess of. *See* Henrietta, Princess
Orloff, Alexis, 223, 227
Orloff, Gregory, 223, 225, 226, 229

P

"Palmer," Anne (afterwards Countess of Sussex), 148, 172
"Palmer," Barbara. *See* Fitzroy
Palmer, Roger (afterwards Earl of Castlemaine), 147–9, 151, 153
Paskievitch, Prince, 238–9
Paul, Tsar, 221, 222, 227, 228, 230
Paulinus, C. Suetonius, 35
Pembroke, Philip Herbert, Earl of, 169, 184
Pepys, Samuel, 148, 151, 154, 155, 157, 158
Pertinax, Emperor, 24–5
Peter the Great, 209–12, 215, 216
Peter II, Tsar, 211, 212–3
Peter III, Tsar, 218, 219*ff*, 227
Philip of Macedon, 15–6
Philip, King of Spain, 98, 100
Pickering, Sir William, 100–101
Pilāji Gaikwār, 137
Pitt, William, 204*n*
Placidia, 30
Plutarch, 45
Pollio, Trebellius, 57, 69
Pompey (Cnæus Pompeius Magnus), 20, 39
Poniatovsky, Stanislas, 221, 224
Pope, Alexander, 205
Poppæa Sabina, 23
Portsmouth, Duchess of. *See* Kéroualle
Potemkin, Gregory, 225–6, 229–30
Probatus, 69–70
Probus, M. Aurelius, 71–2
Procopius, 81, 83–4, 90, 91, 92
Ptolemy II, 18
Ptolemy III (Eunergetes), 19
Ptolemy XIII (Auletes), 37–8
Ptolemy XIV, 38–41
Ptolemy XV, 41–2
Ptolemy (XVI), son of Antony, 45, 52, 57
Ptolemy, son of Cleopatra Selene, 57
Pulcheria, 30–1

Q

Quéroualle. *See* Kéroualle

R

Rājārām, 115, 116, 117–23, 128, 133, 136
Rājasbai, 117, 118, 119, 120, 122, 123, 124, 128, 129, 131, 142
Raleigh, Sir Walter, 103, 105, 110

Rāmrāja, 131–3, 134–5, 138, 139*n*, 140, 141, 142, 143–4
Rāmchandra Bhavdekar, 120, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 128
Ranelagh, Lord, 236
Razumovsky, Alexis, 215, 216, 218, 225
Reuss-Schleiz, Prince Henry of, 240–41
Richmond and Lennox, Charles Stuart, Duke of, 151, 168
Robsart, Amy (later Lady Dudley), 101, 110
Rochester, Lawrence Hyde, Earl of, 183
Romanus, Emperor, 33
Ruvigny, French ambassador, 169

S

Sadāshivrao, 142
Sagunabai, 130
Sakwarbai, 130, 132
Sala, G. A., 233, 253
Saltikoff, Sergius, 221*n*
Sambhājī, son of Shivājī, 115–7, 118, 125
Sambhājī, son of Rājārām, 120, 122, 124, 128, 129, 130, 132, 142
Sapor, 64, 65–6, 67, 72, 74
Sedley, Catherine, 193
Semiramis, 13
Seneca, 22
Severus, L. Septimius (afterwards Emperor), 24–5, 61, 63
Severus, M. Aurelius Alexander, Emperor. *See* Alexianus
Seymour, Edward, Earl of Hertford, 110
Seymour, Thomas, Lord, 96, 97, 98, 109
Seymour, William, Earl of Hertford, 110–111
Shaftesbury, Anthony Ashley, Earl of, 160, 178, 179, 181
Shāh Alam, 125
Shāhu. *See* Shivājī
Shāhu II, 43
Sheba, Queen of, 13
Shivājī Bhonsle, 113–5, 116, 117, 129
Shivājī (Shāhu), 117, 118, 119, 122, 123, 125–32, 138, 141
Shivājī, son of Tārābai, 119, 122, 123, 128, 130
Schrenk, Baron von, 243, 244
Shrewsbury, Countess of, 177
Shuvaloff, Ivan, 216, 225
Silverius, Pope, 85
Sindia, 127
Solomon, 13, 58
Somerset, Edward Seymour, Duke of, 96, 97
Somerset, Charles Seymour, Duke of, 206
Sophia, Regent, 209
Southampton, Earl of, 154
Soyārabai, 115
St. Albans, Duke of. *See* Beauclerc
Stewart, Frances (afterwards Duchess of Richmond), 151, 152, 155, 168
Stuart, Lady Arabella, 110–111
Sunderland, Robert Spencer, Earl of, 177, 204
Sunderland, Countess of, 177*n*
Sun Yat-sen, 275
Swift, Dean, 199

T

Tārābai Rāni: a Maratha, 112; married to Rājārām, 117–8; her father, 117, 124; at Vishalgad, 119; bears a son, 119; at Jingi, 120–2; at Panhāla, 122; has her son crowned, 123; in the field, 124; sets up her capital at Kolhāpur, 127; betrayed and made captive, 127–8; at Satāra, 129–30; reveals an unknown grandson, 131–2; her struggle with Bālāji, 133*ff*; imprisons her grandson, 135; her plot with Umābai, 138; calls in aid from Gujarat, 138; defeated, but defends Satāra, 140; makes peace with Bālāji, 141; her oath, 141; still keeps her grandson prisoner, 142; dies,

143 ; the theory of reincarnated hates, 143–4
Theodabad, 90–1
Theodora the Great : her looks, 78 ; the Imperial courtesan legend, 78*ff* ; her origin, 78, 92 ; marries Justinian, 80 ; made Augusta, 81 ; becomes Empress, 81 ; the allegations against her, 81 ; the case for, 81–2 ; Justinian's opinion, 82 ; her eulogists, 82 ; the religious factor, 82–4 ; her Monophysitism, 83, 84–5 ; has a Pope deposed, 85 ; "the Nika Revolt," 87 ; her courage saves the situation, 88 ; her defeat of John of Cappadocia, 88–90 ; her treatment of Amalasuntha, 90–1 ; Procopius's charges of extravagance, 91–2 ; her charities, 92 ; her daughter and alleged son, 92 ; her death, 93 ; Justinian's right wife, 93 ; a super-woman, 93
Theodora, daughter of Constantine VIII, 34
Theodoric, 90
Theodosius the Great, 30
Theodosius II, 30–1, 33
Theodotos, 38, 39
Theresa, Queen, of Bavaria, 243
Tiberius, Emperor, 21, 22
Timur, 77
Tomyris, 14, 35
Trajan, Emperor, 60
Trimbakpant Purandare, 139
Trimbakrao Dābhāde, 137
Tuan, Prince, 274
Tung-chih, Emperor, 263, 265–6
Tyrconnel, Richard Talbot, Earl (later Duke) of, 195, 206*n*
Tyrconnel, Duchess of. *See* Jennings, Frances
Tze-an, Empress, 263–4, 266–7
Tze-hi, Empress : the violation of her tomb in 1928, 258–9 ; the cost of her funeral, 259 ; her predecessors in Chinese history, 260–1 ; her origin, 261–2 ; goes to Imperial harem, 262 ; her looks, 262 ; bears a son to Hien-fung, 263 ; her first exile, 263 ; becomes co-regent with Tze-an, 264 ; her grip on public affairs, 264 ; marries her sister to Prince Chun, 265 ; her principle of counterpoise, 265 ; takes up Li Hung-chang, 265 ; loses her son, 265 ; her second *coup d'état*, 266 ; becomes sole regent, 267 ; retires from control of affairs, 268 ; her third *coup d'état*, 269–70 ; rules China to her death, 270 ; misled by the Boxers, 270 ; in exile again, 270–71 ; returns to Peking, 271 ; a changed woman, 271 ; a reformer, 272 ; still tyrannises over Kwang-hsu, 272 ; dies, 272 ; her successor, 273 ; her work undone, 273 ; her character, 273–6 ; chief failings, 274 ; her favourite doctrine the Happy Mean, 276

U

Umābai, 137–40

V

Vaballathus, 68, 70–1, 75
Valerian, Emperor, 64–5, 71
Valentinian, Emperor, 30
Vanbrugh, Sir John, 204
Vandam, Albert, 240
Vendôme, Philippe de, 183
Verina, Empress, 31–2
Vigilius, Pope, 85
Villiers, Barbara (afterwards Mrs. Palmer, Countess of Castlemaine, and Duchess of Cleveland) : her descent, 146 ; girlhood, 146–7 ; marriage, 147 ; meets Charles II, 147–8 ; bears him a daughter, 148 ; becomes Lady Castlemaine, 148–9 ; bears a son to Charles, 150 ; made Lady of the Bedchamber to the Queen, 150–1 ; moves to Whitehall Palace, 151 ; her

third child, 151; takes a part in politics, 152–3; helps in Clarendon's ruin, 154–5; her relations with her cousin Buckingham, 155–6, 158, 163, 177; takes a new lover, 157; leaves Whitehall, 157; still influential with Charles, 158; has another lover, 159; made Duchess of Cleveland, 164; her sway over Charles, 165; supplanted, 166; bears her fifth child, 166; her affair with John Churchill, 166–7, 193; her card-play, 170; honours for her sons, 170; goes to Paris, 172; her conduct there, 176; pays a visit to England, 177; settles there again, 182; at Whitehall, January, 1685, 184; ? mentioned by Charles on his deathbed, 186; under James II and William, 188; the episode of Beau Feilding, 188–9; her last days and death, 189–90
Vishvasrao, 142
Vorontzoff, Elizabeth, 222, 223

W

Wahballath. *See* Vaballathus
Walpole, Sir Robert, 204
Walsingham, Sir Francis, 95, 104
Worcester, Marchioness of, 149–50
Wu, Empress, 260–1

X

Xerxes, 15

Y

Yashwantrao Dābhāde, 137, 138, 139
Yehonala. *See* Tze-hi
Yehonala (wife of Kwang-hsu), 267
Yesubai, 117, 118, 119
York, Duke of. *See* James
York, Duchess of (Anne Hyde), 158, 192
York, Duchess of. *See* Marie Beatrice, Queen
Yuan Shi-kai, 269
Yunglu, 269, 273

Z

Zabdas, 69, 71*n*, 73
Zeno, Emperor, 31–32
Zenobia, Queen of Palmyra: her admiration of Cleopatra, 56; reported claim of descent from Cleopatra, 56; no proof, 57; description of, 57; her Arab blood, 58, 76; native name, 63; marries Odænathus, 63; her education, 64; takes Longinus as adviser, 64; unjustly accused of death of Odænathus, 68; her family, 68; regent of Palmyra, 68; her relations with Rome, 69; adds Egypt to her dominions, 69–70; receives letter from Aurelian, 70; breaks with Rome, 71; loses Egypt, 72; abandons Antioch to Aurelian, 73; defeated at Emesa, 73; besieged in Palmyra, 74; flight and capture, 74; said to have repudiated Longinus, 74; led in triumph at Rome, 75; her last days, 75; possible descendants, 75–6; a great figure, 76
Zoe, wife of Leo VI, 33
Zoe, wife of Romanus, 33–4
Zonaras, 76
Zuboff, Plato, 226, 229
Zulfikar Khan, 120–2, 125

Vowel quantities in some Indian place-names, etc.:

Ahmadābād	Nāsik
Ahmadnagar	Panhāla
Bijāpur	Pānipat
Gujarāt	Rājā
Kāthiāwār	Rāmeshwaram
Kolhāpur	Rāni
Mālvan	Sātāra
Mālwā	Senāpati
Narbadā	Tuljāpur